This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

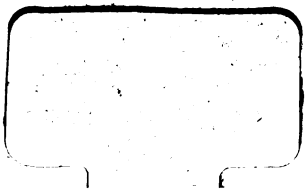
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The Arthur and Elizabeth
SCHLESINGER LIBRARY
on the History of Women
in America

Library Resources Grant



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PORTRAIT OF MRS. CUSTIS (LATER MRS. WASHINGTON), PAINTED BY JOHN WOOLASTON, AND NOW OWNED BY GENERAL G. W. C. LEE, OF LEXINGTON, VA.

Digitized by Google

WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

MARTHA WASHINGTON

BY ANNE HOLLINGSWORTH WHARTON

WITH PORTRAIT

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK MDCCCXCVII

Digitized by Google

973
W31w

Copyright, 1897, by
Charles Scribner's Sons

University Press
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

74.272.

Digitized by Google

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

THIS STORY OF THE LIFE OF A TRUE WOMAN

IS DEDICATED

WITH REVERENT AFFECTION

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

The story of Martha Washington's life has not been an easy one to tell, so largely has she, as a distinct personality, been overshadowed by the greater importance of the figure that has stood beside her. As the wife of Washington she has always been presented upon the pages of history; and thus, with true wifely devotion, would she have chosen to stand. Hence, in writing of Mrs. Washington, except during the early years of her life in Williamsburg, the author has unconsciously drawn the picture of husband and wife together as they appeared to her mind. By this means have come to us some glimpses of Washington as husband, host, and country gentleman, which have added not a little to the charm of a personality that has sometimes seemed remote and solitary in its greatness.

At the outset of her task the biographer was confronted with a serious difficulty from the apparent inadequacy of material, in the form of personal and family letters, all of Mrs. Washington's letters to her husband and his to her having been destroyed at her own request, while some of

Digitized by Google

her nieces completed the holocaust by making a bonfire of nearly all the family letters. In the pursuance of this work there has, however, come to light so much of interest in contemporaneous descriptions, and from family traditions of Mount Vernon handed down from one generation to another, while the few letters of Mrs. Washington's that have escaped destruction are so characteristic, that it seems possible to present the bare outline of facts, long known to the world, clothed with some charm of individuality and some warmth of human interest.

If it shall be the writer's good fortune to give to readers of to-day a satisfactory picture of Mrs. Washington as she appeared in her own home, and in the official life that claimed so much of her time, she will feel that the many hours passed in research and inquiry have not been spent in vain.

For much valuable assistance and the use of some original letters, the writer makes grateful acknowledgments to General Charles W. Darling, Corresponding Secretary of the Oneida Historical Society; to Dr. Emory McClintock and Mr. Edmund D. Halsey, of the Washington Association of Morristown, N.J.; to Mr. Curtis Guild, of Boston; to Miss Frances A. Logan, Mr. Ferdinand J. Dreer, and Mr. Charles Henry Hart, of Philadelphia; to Mr. David S. Forbes,

Digitized by Google

of Fredericksburg, Virginia; to Mr. Charles W. Coleman and Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, of Williamsburg, Virginia; to Mrs. Martha Custis Carter, of Washington, D. C.; and to Mrs. Sally Nelson Robins and Mr. W. G. Stanard, of Richmond.

To Mr. William S. Baker, of Philadelphia, especial thanks are due, not only for the valuable information gained from his Itinerary of General Washington during the Revolution, but for the use of the sheets of his most interesting unpublished volume upon Washington after the Revolution. The list is long, but the courtesies shown to the writer during the preparation of these pages have been many.

Among authorities consulted have been the various lives of Washington, especially those of Irving, Sparks, and Lodge; also Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, by G. W. P. Custis; The Writings of George Washington, collected and edited by W. C. Ford; Topography of Washington's Camp of 1780, by Emory McClintock, LL.D.; the Story of an Old Farm, by Andrew Mellick; Mary and Martha Washington, by Benson J. Lossing; Mrs. Ellet's Women of the Revolution; Griswold's Republican Court; Martha J. Lamb's History of New York; the History of New York, by William L. Stone; the Letters and Diaries of John Adams; the Letters of Abigail Adams, and of Charlotte

Digitized by Google

Chambers; the Journal of William Maclay; the Diaries of Christopher Marshall, Jacob Hiltzheimer, Elizabeth Drinker, and Manasseh Cutler; An Excursion to the United States of America, 1794, by Henry Wansey; the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography; the American Magazine of History; the Virginia Historical Magazine; Virginia Collections; the William and Mary Quarterly; and last, but by no means least, many newspapers of the last century.

A. H. W.

PHILADELPHIA, *March, 1897.*

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

PAGE

I—A LITTLE VIRGINIA MAID

Life in the Old Dominion — Knights of the Golden Horseshoe — Birth and Ancestry of Martha Dandridge — Education in Colonial Days — Social Life in Virginia — Williamsburg the Capital — William and Mary College — Bruton Church — The Governor's Palace . . . 1

II—AN EARLY MARRIAGE

A Débutante of Fifteen — The Custis Family — An Eccentric Couple — Daniel Parke Custis and Evelyn Byrd — Marriage of Martha Dandridge and Daniel Parke Custis — Their Children — Happy Married Life — Death of Mr. Custis — Widowhood 14

III—THE YOUNG VIRGINIA COLONEL

A Military Hero — Characteristics and Appearance of Colonel Washington — Meets Mrs. Custis — Her Portrait by Woolaston — A Brief Courtship — Early Love Affairs of Washington — A Colonial Wedding — The Six Chimney House — Washington takes his seat in House of Burgesses 27

IV—EARLY DAYS AT MOUNT VERNON

Colonel Washington takes his Wife to Mount Vernon — Mrs. Washington and her Children — Domestic Letters — A Visit to Westmoreland County — Fashionable Garments from London — A Busy Couple — Pleasures and Hospitalities of Mount Vernon — Little Martha Custis — Church-going — Benevolence 53

Digitized by Google

PAGE

V—THE SHADOW OF COMING EVENTS

The Stamp Act — Non-importation at Mount Vernon — John Parke Custis and Eleanor Calvert — Death of Martha Custis — Grief of Washington — Marriage of John Parke Custis — Mrs. Washington's Letter to the Bride — Washington a Delegate to the Congress in Philadelphia — Patriotism of Mrs. Washington — General Washington's Letter to his Wife on taking Command of the Army — His Expressions on Married Life 69

VI—A JOURNEY TO CAMBRIDGE

Lord Dunmore on the Virginia Coast — Mrs. Washington thought to be in Danger — Sets out for Cambridge — Reception in Philadelphia — In New Jersey — Reaches Headquarters — A Twelfth Night Party — Friendship formed in Camp — Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Adams — Mrs. Washington in New York — Inoculated for Small-pox in Philadelphia — Returns to Mount Vernon 88

VII—CAMP LIFE

Mrs. Washington in Morristown — Social Life at Headquarters — Mrs. Washington and the Morristown Ladies — Patriotism of New Jersey Women — Mrs. Washington at Valley Forge — Mrs. Henry Drinker visits Headquarters — Rejoicings over the French Alliance — Mrs. Washington in New Jersey the Second Time — Describes a Review of the Troops — The Ford Mansion — Mrs. Washington's Visitors — A Philadelphia Sewing Circle — The General at Mount Vernon — Surrender of Cornwallis — Death of John Parke Custis — The Washingtons in Philadelphia 109

VIII—AFTER THE WAR

Mrs. Washington at Newburgh — Camp Gayeties — Mrs. Washington's Garden — Illness — Marriage of Mrs. Custis — Washington resigns his Commission — Husband and Wife return to Mount Vernon — A Merrie Christmas — Guests at Mount Vernon — Additions to

Digitized by Google

PAGE

the House — Hospitality of the Mansion House — Mrs. Washington as a Hostess — A Strict Disciplinarian — Anecdotes of Mount Vernon — A Visit from Lafayette — Death of Mrs. Washington's Mother and Brother — Marriage of Fanny Bassett — Two Learned Ladies visit Mount Vernon — Portraits of Mrs. Washington — A Visit to Fredericksburg — Report of the Presidential Electors 143

IX—LIFE IN NEW YORK

Reluctance of the General and Mrs. Washington to leave Mount Vernon — Mrs. Mary Washington's carriage — A Journey to the Capital — Reception of Mrs. Washington in Baltimore and Philadelphia — Mrs. Robert Morris accompanies Mrs. Washington to New York — Enthusiastic Reception in New Jersey and New York — Executive Mansion — Etiquette of the First Administration — Drawing-Rooms, Levees, and Dinners — Anecdote of the Early Shad — Simplicity of the Washingtons in Private Life — Church-going — Residence of John Adams — A Summer in New York — Theatre-going — Anecdote of Wignell in Darby's Return — New Year's Day in 1790 — Guests of Mrs. Washington and Mrs. John Jay 182

X—PHILADELPHIA THE CAPITAL

Remarks of Travellers upon New York and Philadelphia — High Street Residence of the Washingtons — The President's Carriages — Mrs. Washington's Drawing-rooms in Philadelphia — City Dancing Assemblies — Miss Chambers describes a Birth-night Ball — Theatres in Old Philadelphia — Christ Church — Breakfasts and Dinners at the President's — Honors to a Dead Indian — Visits of Ceremony and Friendship — Mrs. Washington's Grand-daughters in Philadelphia — Yellow Fever — Death of Mrs. Tobias Lear — Germantown Residence — Letters to Mrs. George A. Washington — Young Lafayette in America — Portraits of the President and Mrs. Washington — Last Birthday in Philadelphia — Retirement from Office — The Washingtons return to Mount Vernon 218

Digitized by Google

PAGE

XI—LAST DAYS AT MOUNT VERNON

Mrs. Washington's Happiness in her Home — Guests at Mount Vernon — Mr. Latrobe visits the Washingtons — A Birth-night Ball in Alexandria — Journey to the Federal City — Mrs. Washington's Letters to Mrs. G. W. Fairfax and Mrs. Samuel Powel — Eleanor Custis and her Lovers — Her Marriage to Lawrence Lewis — Mrs. Carrington's Description of Mrs. Washington — Illness and Death of the General — Mr. Lear's Description of his Last Hours — Mrs. Washington's Letter to Congress about Removing his Remains to Washington — The Rev. Manasseh Cutler visits Mrs. Washington — Death of Martha Washington — Notices in Journals of the Day 264

Digitized by Google

MARTHA WASHINGTON

I

A LITTLE VIRGINIA MAID

A STORY is told of a worldly minded Virginia maiden, who, when asked by a relative anxious about her spiritual condition whether she wished "to be born again," promptly replied, "No, because I might not happen to be born in Virginia."

Although many of the distinctive features of the life in the Old Dominion have passed away with the exchange of manorial homes upon vast estates for dwellings in cities, and with the abolition of slavery from her borders, Virginia still weaves a charm all her own for those who love to wander among her historic landmarks and listen to the voices of her past.

For such she unfolds many a tale of love and adventure dating back to the early settlers, some of whom were lured hither by traditions of a Southern sea, upon whose tran-

Digitized by Google

quil bosom they might sail away to China and the Indies, — traditions which obtained as late as the time of Governor Berkeley, and floated like an alluring mirage before the minds of Alexander Spotswood and his Knights of the Golden Horseshoe. To get beyond the mountains to the lakes was the avowed object of these well-shod equestrians; but the picture of the good Governor and his followers setting forth upon an exploring expedition, and loyally drinking the King's health from the newly discovered Mount George, has about it a flavor of the adventurous and imaginative spirit of the century that produced Columbus and the Cabots, and that led Raleigh and De Soto to sail strange seas in search of new paths to the treasures of Cathay.[1]

[1] A small golden horseshoe, with jewels for nail heads, was given by Governor Spotswood to each of his companions upon their return from their famous expedition to the Western mountains. The motto of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe was *Sic juvat transcendere montes.*

Nathaniel West Dandridge, a near relative of Martha Dandridge, owned one of these golden horseshoes. The Rev. Edward Murdaugh told a member of the Dandridge family, some thirty years since, that while carrying this horseshoe from the bank of Williamsburg, where it was kept, to show it to an old lady, he dropped it in the street, and never saw it again. He said that he never after walked through the streets of Williamsburg without thinking of it and hoping to find it; but the golden horseshoe, like Captain Kidd's treasure, has thus far eluded the most diligent searcher.

Digitized by Google

Into this old Virginia life, into the best part of it, was born a child whose name was destined to become a household word all over the land. Little Martha Dandridge, whose birth is recorded in the family Bible, June 21, 1731, was the eldest child of Colonel John Dandridge and Frances Jones, who were married July 22, 1730.

On her mother's side Martha came of a goodly line of scholars and divines. Her grandfather, the Rev. Roland Jones, son of another Rev. Roland Jones, of Berford, Oxford County, England, was the first of the family to come to America. He was in 1633 graduated from Merton College, Oxford, whence he came to Virginia to minister in Bruton Parish from 1674 until his death in 1688, as is recorded upon his tombstone in that church. Orlando Jones, son of Roland, and grandfather of Martha Dandridge, was burgess of New Kent County in 1718. His wife was Martha Macon, daughter of Gideon Macon, of New Kent County, secretary to Sir William Berkeley. To this maternal grandmother Martha Dandridge was indebted for her good old English name.

Colonel John Dandridge, the father of Martha, was a planter in New Kent, and, according to recent genealogical investigations,

Digitized by Google

was a brother of the Hon. William Dandridge of Esling Green, King William County, who married Unity, only child of Colonel Nathaniel West. It has long been believed, and frequently stated, that Martha Dandridge was descended from the noble and influential West family, of which Thomas, third Lord Delaware, was the good genius of the early Virginia settlements, as well as their Governor and Captain-General. It is now maintained by an excellent authority [1] that the only connection between the Dandridges and Wests was through the marriage of the Hon. William Dandridge to Unity West, a great-great niece of the third Lord Delaware. This William Dandridge, a brother of Colonel John, was himself a prominent figure in Virginia history, being in 1727 a member of the Colonial Council, and one of the commissioners appointed with Colonel William Byrd to settle the dividing line between his own Colony and North Carolina. A few years later he entered upon a distinguished career of naval service. From 1737 until his death in 1743, Captain William Dandridge commanded the Wolfe, the South Sea, and the Ludlow Castle, all three in his Majesty's service. While in command of the

[1] The Dandridges of Virginia, by Wilson Miles Cary.— "William and Mary Quarterly," July, 1896.

Digitized by Google

South Sea he took part in Oglethorpe's attack upon St. Augustine and Admiral Vernon's siege of Carthagena. This gentleman and his brother John used the arms of the Dandridges of Great Malvern, Worcestershire. William Dandridge settled upon one side of the Pamunkey River,[1] near West Point, which bore the name of his wife's ancestors, while Colonel John settled upon the other side of the same river in New Kent County, where his children were born, and where he served as county-clerk, an honorable and lucrative position in Colonial days.

Colonel John Dandridge died in Fredericksburg. His tombstone, in St. George's Churchyard, bears the following inscription: —

"Here lies interred the Body
of Col. JOHN DANDRIDGE
of New Kent County, who
Departed this life the 31st day
of August 1756, aged 56 years."

[1] Mr. William Wallace Tooker traces back the name Pamunkey to a curious and interesting derivation. He says that the name, originally "Uttamussack at Pamunkee," did not designate the stream, but the triangular peninsula formed by the two main branches of the river York, where the town of West Point is now situated. Here Powhatan and his tribes had their great home filled with images of their kings and devils, and tombs of their predecessors, and here, as John Smith related, the natives received him when a captive "with most strange and fearful conjurations," lasting through three days. See "The American Antiquarian," September, 1895.

Digitized by Google

As the Dandridge family lived near Williamsburg, which in addition to being the capital of the Colony was near the sea, and consequently in more frequent communication with England than the more inland towns of Virginia, we may believe that Martha enjoyed all the advantages of a young girl in her class of life, in days when classes in life were more distinctly marked than in our own time.

If we are sometimes puzzled over the spelling of the few letters written by her that have come down to this generation, and fall to wondering whether the little lady's emphatic rendering of "do," "no," "go," and like words, which she usually wrote "doe," "noe," and "goe," was an indication of her own administrative ability, we may be quite sure that she was thoroughly trained in all social and domestic accomplishments, which were then considered of far greater importance to a woman than any amount of book learning.

Why, indeed, should we regard orthography, in the last century, as a test of gentle breeding, when it is subject to variations even among students of to-day, and when Queen Elizabeth, a little more than a century earlier, wrote "sovereign" in as many as seven different styles, while the very learned Duchess of

Digitized by Google

Norfolk, when she desired the Earl of Essex to accept a gift at her hands, wrote, with a parsimony of lettering out of all proportion to the generosity of her spirit, "I pra you tak hit"!

That little Miss Dandridge could play upon the spinnet, we know, as she spoke, in after life, of giving lessons upon that instrument to her granddaughter; and that she was an apt pupil in the mysteries of cross, tent, and satin stitch, in hem, fell, and overseam, — and indeed in all such feats of the needle as were considered essential to a young lady's equipment for life in the youth of our great-grandmothers, — is proved by the careful instruction in the arts of "stitchery" which she bestowed upon her granddaughters. We may also be quite sure that her dancing was unexceptional, as this accomplishment then formed a more important part of the education of a young Virginian lady than the circle of the sciences. Dr. Franklin, from the semi-Quaker atmosphere of Philadelphia, deemed it of great moment that his daughter Sally should have regular instruction in this art, while the hours which Mr. Jefferson desired his daughter to devote to the practice of certain steps were quite out of proportion to those allotted to mental exercises. Hence, although we find

Digitized by Google

no mention of Mrs. Washington's having entered into the dance in later years, when her distinguished husband was noted for the grace and elegance with which he stepped through the minuet with the maids and matrons of the capital, there is no reason to doubt that she held her own with the Virginia belles of her time in this as in all other accomplishments. The Dandridge and other estates upon the Pamunkey were near enough to Williamsburg to allow their owners to enter into the social life of this place, which shared with Annapolis the honor of leading the Virginia fashions of the day. If the English Surveyor of Customs wrote from Annapolis of the extravagance of its inhabitants and the beauty and grace of its women, another traveller about the same period descanted upon the number of coaches that crowded the deep sandy streets of Williamsburg, while the charms of its daughters have more than twice been "sung in song, rehearsed in story."

Williamsburg was the capital of Virginia until 1779, despite the objections raised by those who considered Jamestown, Hampton, and other seaboard towns to be more conveniently situated.

This old city, laid out by the doughty and

Digitized by Google

irascible Nicholson, with its streets in the form of a W and M in honor of the Lord and Lady of Virginia proclaimed in 1689, and with its college of William and Mary named after the same royal patrons, is still sufficiently quaint and interesting in appearance to recall something of the life of a place which was once a centre of law, learning, and society. William and Mary, the Alma Mater of many distinguished men, as she stands upon her college green, which is adorned with a statue of the well-beloved Botetourt, wears an appearance of age beyond her years, the original structure, planned by Sir Christopher Wren and opened in 1700, having been burned down and rebuilt several times. Near by stands the home of George Wythe, in good preservation, and the old Powder Horn, restored through the exertions of patriotic Virginia women; but the Six Chimney House, in which Martha Washington is said to have spent a part of her second honeymoon, has not one brick left upon another, although its site is to be found, and a large yew-tree, planted by the hands of its former mistress, still stands beside what was once the entrance to a hospitable and happy home.

The spire of old Bruton church draws the stranger irresistibly to enter its sacred enclos-

Digitized by Google

ure and wander through its graveyard, where, under friendly spreading trees and beneath such sculptured and emblazoned marbles as are to be found nowhere else in America, sleep Ludwells, Pages, Burwells, Raes, and Barradalls. Dear to the heart of Virginians is this, one of her oldest churches, although it is some years younger than that one, long since demolished, which was erected by the early settlers, and of which Colonel Byrd wrote in his cynical fashion, "they extended themselves as far as Jamestown, where, like true Englishmen they built a Church that cost them no more than 50 lbs and a tavern that cost them 500."

Some of the catalpa trees which bordered the road leading to the "Governor's Palace" are still standing; but not a vestige remains of the edifice in which the royal governors of Virginia long held social sway.[1] Often along this shaded drive passed fair Rebecca Burwell,

[1] Upon the site of the "Governor's Palace" now stands a pathetic little monument of a mother's unselfish devotion, — the "Mattey School." This school was endowed by Mrs. Mary Whaley, in memory of her little son Matthew, aged nine. With her fifty pounds' endowment she left directions that the "neediest children" of the parish should be here offered instruction in the art of reading, writing, and arithmetic, "for the purpose aforesaid, to Eternalize Mattey's School by the name of Mattey's School forever," as is narrated in the "William and Mary Quarterly" for July, 1895.

Digitized by Google

whose lovers wrangled about her almost as much as the wooers of the lady of Odysseus; and Mistress Alice Page of Rosewell, who had all the virtues possible to womankind inscribed upon her tombstone; and Colonel William Byrd and his wife, and lovely Evelyn Byrd; and also the heroine of our story when she was a shy girl of fifteen, and again when, as a young wife, she frequented the palace with her first husband, Colonel Custis, and later still when, as the wife of Colonel Washington, she paid her respects to Governors Fauquier, Botetourt, and Dunmore. Along this same drive passed the coach of my Lady Dunmore and her daughters on their way to a ball given them in the old capitol at the other end of the town, which festivity was speedily followed by a day of fasting and prayer for the Colonies, the election of delegates to a general congress, and an inglorious flight in the Fowey of the last royal governor of Virginia, who, like another child of monarchy in France a few years later, failed to appreciate the difference between a rebellion and a revolution, even when the storm was beating about his own ears.

Not many miles from Williamsburg on the James are a number of fine old homesteads, where in the palmy days of old Virginia their

Digitized by Google

owners, surrounded by large plantations and attended by retinues of servants, lived a life nearly approaching that of the English country gentleman. Upon the Pamunkey and York also were numerous estates, while on the other side of the Chesapeake, upon that long peninsula curiously named the Eastern Shore of Virginia, were the homes of the Custis family and others of high degree. From these plantations near by, and from others more remote, representative Virginians, members of the House of Burgesses, came regularly to Williamsburg, bringing their families with them to take part in any especial gayeties that might occur during the sessions of the legislature, or to enjoy the play.[1]

In such an atmosphere as this, and amid such surroundings, refined and elegant in some respects, crude and unfinished in others, little Martha Dandridge was born and bred. In the most aristocratic circle of this most essentially aristocratic and English of the Colonies, from which wealthy planters sent their sons abroad to complete their educations, and were proud to have it reported in the local

[1] Although the drama seems to have begun its American career in Annapolis, theatrical representations were given in Williamsburg as early as 1752, when two English stars, Lewis Hallam from Goodman's Fields Theatre, and Mrs. Douglass, appeared together upon the boards.

Digitized by Google

gazette that they had been presented at court and bent the knee to royalty, numbering among her relatives many who held high positions under the King, and were among his most loyal subjects, grew to gracious womanhood the future wife of the great soldier and leader of the Revolution.

Digitized by Google

II

AN EARLY MARRIAGE

ALL chronicles agree in stating that Miss Dandridge made her début at the capital during the administration of Governor Gooch, and at an age when, according to modern ideas, she should still have been in the nursery with her younger brothers and sisters.

It is to be regretted that no picture or description has come down to us of the fifteen-year-old débutante in her stiff bodice and flowered petticoat, who made her quaint little courtesy at the court in Williamsburg, which the magnates of old Virginia considered only second in importance to that of St. James. A childish portrait of Martha Dandridge, however, has recently been discovered, quaint and not unattractive.

If a good fairy in the form of some superstitious old Virginia "mammy," endowed with the gift of second sight, foretold the future of this little girl of eight, her relatives and friends must have laughed incredulously at the career of prosperity, influence, and

Digitized by Google

honor that was predicted for her. The record of no such prophecy has come down to us, nor, indeed, of anything relating to her early years. As a rule, the sayings and doings of the woman-child were not considered of sufficient importance to be chronicled in the days in which she lived, or even to be handed down from mother to daughter. No parents' dreams, as prophetic as those of the dreamer of Israel, foretold for her future greatness, nor did an enthusiastic Weems arise to illumine little Martha Dandridge's girlhood with romance and fable, as in the case of her future husband, although this same biographer, describing her in after life, says, "I could never look on her without exclaiming with the poet, —

> 'She was nearest heaven of all on earth I knew;
> And all but adoration was her due.'"

As the Rev. Mr. Weems's Life of Washington was largely an imaginative production, and as, according to the testimony of several historians, he was never rector of Mount Vernon Parish, as he styled himself, and did not see much of General Washington at any period of his life, it is safe to believe that he knew even less of the lady for whom he expressed such enthusiastic admiration.

Martha Dandridge was of small stature,

Digitized by Google

like all the women of her family, and slight in early life, with light-brown hair and hazel eyes. The eldest daughter of a large family of brothers and sisters, she was capable and mature beyond her years, and far too sensible to allow her head to be turned by the many compliments paid her. We read that she was soon recognized as a reigning belle in the small world of Williamsburg, where she straightway engaged the affections of one of its most desirable *partis*, Mr. Daniel Parke Custis.

The family with which Miss Dandridge was soon to be allied deserves more than passing mention. John Custis, the first whose name appears in Virginia, was from Rotterdam, although the family seems to have been of English origin. John Custis of Rotterdam was in Virginia in 1640, and here three of his six sons settled, — John, William, and Joseph. John, the ancestor of Daniel Parke Custis, was sheriff of Northampton County, a member of the Governor's Council, and in 1676 Major-General in Bacon's Rebellion. His tomb stands at Arlington upon the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and records these and other facts. The Custis arms, three parrots, are engraved upon his tombstone, as upon another near by, under which lie the remains

Digitized by Google

of Colonel John Custis, grandson of the old councillor, himself a King's Councillor. This latter headstone bears the following unique inscription: —

BENEATH THIS MARBLE TOMB LIES Y^E^ BODY
OF THE HONORABLE JOHN CUSTIS, ESQ.,
OF THE CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG AND PARISH OF BRUTON
FORMERLY OF HUNGARS PARISH ON THE EASTERN SHORE
OF
VIRGINIA AND THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON THE
PLACE OF HIS NATIVITY.
AGED 71 YEARS AND YET LIVED BUT SEVEN YEARS
WHICH WAS THE SPACE OF TIME HE KEPT
A BACHELOR'S HOUSE AT ARLINGTON
ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA.
THIS INFORMATION PUT ON THIS TOMB WAS BY HIS
OWN POSITIVE ORDER.

As Colonel John Custis was born in 1678, and married at the age of twenty-eight, the singular reference to but seven years of living evidently refers to the years intervening between his majority and his marriage to Frances Parke in 1706. This lady, beautiful and well born, was possessed of an uncertain temper; or perhaps it would be more correct to say of a certain shrewish temper, which she seems to have inherited from no stranger, as her father, Daniel Parke, who rejoiced in the title of "Capt. Generall and Chief Governor of the

Digitized by Google

Leeward Islands," is spoken of as "a sparkish gentleman around town, who knowing something of the art of fencing was as ready to give a challenge, especially before company, as the greatest Hector in Williamsburg."

In writing of the governorship of Sir Edmund Andros in Virginia, Dr. Lyon G. Tyler relates the following instance of the ungovernable temper of this gentleman:—

"With a view to recommend himself to the Governor's favor, young Parke undertook a crusade of insult against all friends of the College [William and Mary]. He abused and challenged to mortal combat Francis Nicholson, who was then, though Governor of Maryland, a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors of the Institution; and at length to vent his ill humor against Dr. Blair personally, whose gown protected him from challenges, he set up a claim to the pew in church in which Mrs. Blair sat, and one Sunday with great fury and violence, pulled her out of it in the presence of the minister and congregation, who were greatly scandalized at this ruffian and profane action."

This gentleman, who was upon occasions capable of such ungentlemanly behavior, wrote his daughter Frances long letters from abroad, giving her many pages of good advice upon her deportment, which was easier than coming

Digitized by Google

home to instruct her himself, as he evidently found the atmosphere of foreign courts more congenial than the crudities of the transplanted sort. Colonel Parke remained in England many years, was appointed aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough, attended him in the battle of Blenheim, and bore back to Queen Anne tidings of the great victory. For this service his Sovereign Lady rewarded the messenger by giving him her miniature set in diamonds, a gift which appears in Kneller's portrait of this magnificent gentleman, hung upon a red ribbon about his neck, where it accords well with the sumptuous costume of crimson velvet, embroidered in gold, which adorns his handsome person. Colonel Parke afterwards received a general's commission, and was made governor of the Leeward Islands, where he lost his life in an uprising of the people. Of the two daughters who survived him, Lucy had become the second wife of Colonel William Byrd of Westover, and Frances had married Colonel John Custis of Williamsburg.

A florid and impassioned epistle addressed by Colonel Custis to his lady-love is still preserved among their descendants, in which occurs the following unique period: "May angels guard my dearest 'Fidelia,' and deliver

Digitized by Google

her safe to my arms at our next meeting; and sure they won't refuse their protection to a creature so pure and charming that it would be easy for them to mistake her for one of themselves." Despite this and other hyperbolic protestations, a tradition exists to the effect that the lover was well aware of the unangelic disposition of his mistress, and married her with the avowed intention of subduing the high spirit of the beautiful Virginia Katherine; but being less happy in his methods than Shakspeare's hero, he was obliged to admit his defeat, and content himself with the petty post-mortem revenge inscribed upon his tombstone.

Daniel Parke Custis, the child of a union of these somewhat tumultuous elements, was an amiable and estimable gentleman, universally respected, and although many years her senior, possessed sufficient attractions of mind and person to recommend himself to the girl of sixteen whom he desired to make his wife. Handsome, well bred, and with family connections equal to his own, Miss Dandridge seemed a most suitable wife for Mr. Custis; but true to himself, Colonel John placed obstacles in the way of the marriage of these true lovers. Earlier in life — for Daniel Parke Custis was nearly thirty years of age at the time of his

Digitized by Google

courtship — his father had entertained definite matrimonial views for his son, earnestly advocating an alliance with his cousin, Evelyn Byrd, daughter of the eccentric and original Colonel William Byrd, of Westover, whose early notes of travel have made him a sort of Sir John Mandeville in Virginia history. The fact that Miss Evelyn Byrd was several years her cousin's senior, and that the young people entertained no special affection for each other, counted for nothing with these royally autocratic parents, who looked upon the marriage of their children as a most desirable union of two fine estates and aristocratic families. Young Custis is said to have been averse to this marriage of convenience, and his cousin, who cherished a hopeless attachment for an English gentleman of noble family, was no more willing. Finally the ambitious designs of the two parents were frustrated by the failing health and early death of Evelyn Byrd, whose portrait is still to be seen at Brandon, Virginia, and is doubly attractive from the halo of traditional love and constancy that accentuates its romantic and touching beauty.

From the meagre outlines left us of the wooing and winning of Martha Dandridge, it appears that even at this early age she exercised the judgment and tact which served her

Digitized by Google

so well in all her after life. Some words of hers either spoken or written, at this time, reached the ears of Colonel John Custis, and impressed him so favorably that he soon after gave his consent to the marriage. A memorandum in the handwriting of the old Councillor is still preserved, which reads: "I give my free consent to the union of my son Daniel with Miss Martha Dandridge," while a friend and intermediary, Mr. Power, wrote to the anxious lover:[1]—

DEAR SIR, — This comes at last to bring you the news that I believe will be most agreeable to you of any you have ever heard — that you may not be long in suspense I shall tell you at once — I am empowered by your father to let you know that he heartily and willingly consents to your marriage with Miss Dandridge — that he has so good a character of her, that he had rather you should have her than any lady in Virginia — nay, if possible, he is as much enamoured with her character as you are with her person, and this is owing chiefly to a prudent speech of her own. Hurry down immediately for fear he should change the strong inclination he has to your marrying directly. I stayed with him all night, and presented Jack with my little Jack's horse, bridle, and saddle, in your name, which was taken as a singular favor. I

[1] Recollections of Washington, by G. W. P. Custis, p. 20.

Digitized by Google

shall say no more, as I expect to see you soon to-morrow, but conclude what I really am,
Your most obliged and affectionate humble servant,
J. POWER.

To Colonel DANIEL PARKE CUSTIS, New Kent.

Colonel John Custis seems never to have had reason to regret his consent to his son's marriage, and was among the first to bless and kiss the fair girl bride, when the wedding was solemnized, in 1749, at St. Peter's Church in New Kent County, amid the verdure and beauty of a Virginia June.

Mr. Custis took his wife to his home, the White House, upon the banks of the ~~York~~ Pamunkey River, and here and in the Six Chimney House in Williamsburg they spent the happy, fleeting years of their brief married life.[1]

[1] Mr. Daniel Parke Custis, in addition to his broad acres, owned a house in Williamsburg, called the Six Chimney House, and a country place on the York River, which was always spoken of as the White House. Both of these houses were bequeathed by him to his wife and children. The White House seems to have been the constant residence of Mrs. Custis during her widowhood, and here, according to Bishop Meade, her second marriage was solemnized. A fanciful connection between the name of this home of Mrs. Custis and that of the White House in the District of Columbia has been advanced by a recent writer, who says that Washington desired the official residence of the presidents of the United States to be so named in memory of the pleasant Virginia home in which his happiness was consummated. It is needless to say that there is no foundation whatever for this ingenious theory.

Digitized by Google

No letters written by Mrs. Custis during the period of her first marriage are to be found; which may be accounted for by the fact that she lived so near her own family that it was not necessary to communicate with them to any extent by letter. Living in or near Williamsburg, and being connected by birth and early association with its official circles, Colonel and Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis naturally entered into the social life of the capital. Governor Dinwiddie appointed the Colonel to a seat in his Council, but failing health prevented him from entering into the duties and honors of a position that had come to be almost an inheritance in his family.

Four children were born to this couple. Frances Parke and Daniel Parke Custis died in early childhood, as we read upon their tombstones in Bruton churchyard.[1] Martha and John Parke Custis survived their father, who died in the spring of 1757. After less than ten years of married life, ended this union which had been entered into under such favorable auspices; and at the age of twenty-

[1] These little children were buried in the grounds of Marston Church, near the White House. Within a few years their tombs have been restored, and their remains removed, with those of their grandmother, Frances Parke Custis, to Bruton churchyard, through the exertions of an influential member of The Virginia Society for the Preservation of Antiquities.

Digitized by Google

five Mrs. Custis was left a widow with two little children. Colonel Custis, who was as exact in business affairs as he was estimable and gentle in domestic life, left an extensive and valuable estate, of which his wife was sole executrix. From letters which passed between Mrs. Custis and her business agent and chief adviser and friend, Mr. Robert Carter Nicholas, of James City, it appears that she attended personally to the administration of her own and her children's estate, making loans on mortgage of moneys, and through her stewards and agents conducting the sales or exportation of her crops to the best possible advantage. In addition to his large landed estate, Colonel Daniel Parke Custis left thirty thousand pounds sterling in money to his wife, and half that sum to their only daughter, Martha.

From the time of Colonel Custis's death to the meeting between his widow and Colonel Washington, which, according to the best authorities, took place in May, 1758, we find no record of the life of Martha Custis. She probably passed these early months of sorrow in great seclusion, a luxury which was not permitted her after the first year of widowhood, as we find her visiting at the house of her neighbor, Major Chamberlayne, less

Digitized by Google

than eighteen months after her husband's death.

Young, handsome, and reputed the wealthiest widow in Virginia in days when the single state was not regarded as one of blessedness for either man or woman, it is reasonable to believe that many suitors knocked at the door of the White House, the favorite residence of Mrs. Custis during her widowhood, when the first year of mourning was well over. We hesitate to indulge in surmise, and yet, reading between the lines of the scant chronicle, we venture to assume the probability that she had taken refuge with her friend and neighbor, Major Chamberlayne, in order to escape the importunities of some too persistent swain, and thus, like many another woman, fled from her fate only to find it awaiting her at the end of her journey, as here it was that she met Colonel Washington.

Digitized by Google

III

THE YOUNG VIRGINIA COLONEL

AMONG cherished traditions of the old town of Fredericksburg, there is one to the effect that Colonel Washington first met Mrs. Custis at Chatham, the home of Colonel William Fitzhugh, when she was paying a visit there during her husband's life. There is no proof whatever of any such meeting, while it is more than probable that both Colonel and Mrs. Custis had met the young Virginia soldier upon the occasion of one or the other of Washington's visits to the Governor at Williamsburg, as we learn from his diary that he was there upon official business in 1754, after his expedition to the Ohio and the disastrous affair of Great Meadows. Whatever military critics, French and English, said or thought of the young officer's management of this, his first campaign, the Virginia House of Burgesses had no word of censure for the gallant if somewhat rash soldier, as he soon after received a vote of thanks for his services, and money for

Digitized by Google

his men. From that other disaster, which came in the next year, when Braddock led the Colonial forces, Washington alone, says Mr. Lodge, emerged with added glory, being offered upon his return the command of all the Virginia troops upon his own terms. Hence if Mrs. Custis met Colonel Washington during the years of her married life, he appeared before her in the light of a military hero, which, perhaps for some reason having its origin far back in the dim and early struggles of the race, in days when "might made right," is the sort of a hero that has always excited the admiration of the gentlest and most peace-loving of womankind.

Whether or not the young widow had met Colonel Washington prior to their momentous encounter at Major Chamberlayne's house, she had lived too much in official circles not to know by reputation the officer whom Virginia most delighted to honor. Now, in addition to his military renown, high character, and advantages of birth and breeding, Washington appeared before her in all the grace and vigor of his superb manhood. All authorities agree that his figure and bearing were most distinguished. Standing six feet two inches, spare rather than stout, with limbs of noble mould, the young

Digitized by Google

soldier's form and face most harmoniously combined strength and endurance with grace, ease, and dignity. Washington's dignity was inherent, an altogether natural manifestation of his high character and natural self-respect. Whatever graces of manner he possessed were probably acquired by his close and familiar companionship with his half-brother, Lawrence Washington, of Mount Vernon, and through his intimate acquaintance with Lord Fairfax, who, having come from court circles of the Old World to live the life of a recluse upon his estate in Virginia, welcomed to his heart and home this young man, in whom he seems to have found early promise of future greatness.

Mr. Custis,[1] of Arlington, the adopted son of Washington, says that the equestrian portrait painted by Trumbull in 1790, and an engraving by Loisier, from a painting by Coignet, a French artist, are the only two portraits that fairly represent the General's

[1] George Washington Parke Custis, known in his later years as Mr. Custis of Arlington, his beautiful home near Washington, D. C., having been named after the Custis estate upon the Eastern Shore of Virginia, was the grandson of Mrs. Washington, and the adopted son of the General. In his Recollections of Washington, Mr. Custis has related so much that is intimate and personal with regard to the Washingtons, that, despite its disconnected and rambling character, his book will always be authoritative as the record of one who had the advantage of living at Mount Vernon during his childhood and early youth.

Digitized by Google

matchless form. He adds: "So long ago as the days of the vice-regal court of Williamsburg, in the time of Lord Botetourt, Colonel Washington was remarkable for his splendid person. The air with which he wore a small sword, and his peculiar walk, that had the light elastic tread acquired by long service on the frontier, was a matter of much observation, especially to foreigners."

The best-known portraits of Washington were all painted during or after middle life. Even the portrait executed by the elder Peale at Mount Vernon in 1772, with its clear penetrating eye, round unlined face, and alert but commanding form, represents a much older man than the young soldier who, between 1752 and 1756, had performed on the Virginia frontier the most daring service upon record. It is this Washington, in all the strength and enthusiasm of young manhood, brave even to recklessness, as upon the fatal field of Braddock, where he had two horses shot under him and four bullets through his coat, who now appeared before Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis as the honored friend of her host, and a little later as a suitor for her hand.

Mrs. Custis was at this time nearly twenty-seven years of age, being three months

Digitized by Google

younger than her lover, although she has so often been spoken of as the elder of the two. The picture that gives us the best idea of the attractions of the young widow to whom Washington paid his addresses in 1758 is a portrait by John Woolaston, which hangs in the home of her descendants, the Lees of Lexington. This portrait, although crude and inartistic in detail and finish, gives us a strong and definite idea of the subject. It represents a handsome woman in the bloom of early matronhood, a dignified and essentially feminine personality, serene and well-poised, and such Martha Custis seems always to have been.[1]

[1] An animated controversy was maintained, several years since, with regard to this portrait of Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis, Mr. Moncure D. Conway and Mr. L. W. Washington claiming that the Lexington portrait represented Mrs. Fielding Lewis, General Washington's sister; while, upon the other hand, Prof. W. G. Brown, of Washington and Lee University, and Mr. Charles Henry Hart, of Philadelphia, quite as earnestly insisted that the Lexington portrait was of Mrs. Custis, as had always been supposed.

There is certainly some resemblance between the Woolaston portraits of Mrs. Custis and Mrs. Fielding Lewis, but no more striking resemblance than is often found in the portraits of different individuals by the same artist. The strongest argument is that advanced by Mr. Charles Henry Hart, who says that Mr. G. W. P. Custis, who was reared at Mount Vernon, and lived there until Mrs. Washington's death in 1802, when he was twenty-one years of age, never expressed any doubt about this painting as a portrait of his grandmother. Is it at all likely that this grandson, living as he did from his

Digitized by Google

A fanciful sketch has been drawn of the first interview between the stately lovers, who are represented as standing stiffly by the mantel, while the Custis children play upon the floor. This scene is purely imaginary, but the Chamberlayne house is still standing, although Mrs. Custis's own residence, the White House, was destroyed during the Civil War. As the story runs, Colonel Wash-

earliest childhood until manhood at Mount Vernon, should never have discovered that the portrait which he believed was that of his grandmother was in fact that of General Washington's sister? Nor is it likely that Mr. G. W. P. Custis would have allowed this portrait to be reproduced as a picture of Mrs. Washington to illustrate the works of Irving and Sparks, had he not been quite sure that the portrait was of his Grandmother Washington.

Since this little volume has been going through the press, the author has been so fortunate as to come across a description of the family portraits at Mount Vernon, by Mr. John Hunter, an Englishman who visited General Washington in 1785. After speaking of a picture of the Marquis de Lafayette and his family, Mr. Hunter says: "Another of the General with his marching orders, when he was Colonel Washington in the British Army against the French in the last War; and two of Mrs. Washington's children, . . . also a picture of Mrs. Washington when a young woman."

As no other portrait of Mrs. Washington when a young woman has ever been spoken of, it is evident that the English gentleman refers to the disputed picture which now hangs at Lexington, where are also the other portraits of which he speaks, — those of Mrs. Washington's two little children, and the Peale portrait of Washington in his uniform of a Virginia colonel. That this portrait was hanging at Mount Vernon, and was shown to Mr. Hunter as a portrait of Mrs. Washington, seems to settle definitely the question of its authenticity.

Digitized by Google

ington, attended by his servant Bishop,[1] was crossing William's Ferry, which was directly opposite the Chamberlayne house, on his way to the capital of the Colony, where he had some business of importance with the Governor. Major Chamberlayne met him at the ferry, and pressed him to accept the hospitality of his house for a day or two. Colonel Washington at first declined, in consequence of the important business that claimed his presence in Williamsburg; but when the hospitable gentleman added to his persuasions the inducement that the loveliest widow in all Virginia was under his roof, the young officer loosed his bridle-rein, accepted the invitation to dine with Major Chamberlayne, and gave Bishop orders to have the horses ready for departure at an early hour in the afternoon.

The story of this brief soldierly wooing has often been told, but by no person who had

[1] A marked characteristic of Washington's was his power to attract to himself "all sorts and conditions of men." The common soldiers loved him with devoted loyalty, and Braddock, although he unfortunately turned a deaf ear to his young staff officer's advice, was deeply attached to him personally, proving his affection by bequeathing to him his body servant and his favorite horse. When the British commander met his death in the western wilds of Pennsylvania, it was Washington who attended to his burial, and, standing beside that grave in the wilderness, read over the fallen general the burial service of the English Church.

Digitized by Google

better opportunities of giving a correct version of it than Mr. G. W. P. Custis, in his Recollections of Washington. He says that "they were mutually pleased on this their first interview, nor is it remarkable; they were of an age when impressions are strongest. The lady was fair to behold, of fascinating manners and splendidly endowed with worldly benefits. The hero fresh from his early fields, redolent of fame, and with a form on which 'every god did seem to set his seal, to give the world assurance of a man.'" The morning passed pleasantly away. Evening came, with Bishop, true to his orders, firm at his post, holding his favorite charger with one hand, while with the other he was waiting to offer the ready stirrup. The sun sank in the horizon, yet the Colonel appeared not. And then the old soldier marvelled at his chief's delay. "'T was strange, 't was passing strange,' — surely he was not wont to be a single moment behind his appointments, for he was the most punctual of all men. Meantime the host enjoyed the scene of the veteran on duty at the gate while the colonel was so agreeably employed in the parlor, and proclaiming that no guest ever left his house after sunset, his military visitor was, without much difficulty, persuaded to order Bishop to put up the horses

Digitized by Google

for the night. The sun rode high in the heavens the ensuing day when the enamored soldier pressed with his spur his charger's side, and speeded on his way to the seat of government."

Upon his return from Williamsburg, Colonel Washington visited Mrs. Custis in her own house. Tradition says that upon this occasion the lover was rowed across the river by a slave, who, when he was asked whether his mistress was at home, replied, "Yes, sah, I reckon you 'se the man what 's 'spected;" which proves that the fair widow was in readiness to receive her guest. The engagement evidently took place during this visit, as the lovers did not meet again until the time of their marriage, the following January.

We are all familiar with Mr. Thackeray's adroit weaving of this love-story into his Virginians, and, rereading this chapter in the light of later Colonial research, are surprised at his accurate presentation of the life of the Old Dominion, which he says he found more like the England of the Georges than was the England of his own day. In the hands of this master of style and fancy the simple mistake of the gossip Mountain, who found in Colonel Washington's room some lines in which he spoke of his approaching marriage

Digitized by Google

to a well-endowed widow with two children, assumes the vivid colors of reality, and turning the pages with trembling eagerness we feel that the cause of the Colonies hangs in the balance, that at any moment the great Virginia soldier may fall in a duel at the hands of young George Warrington, or that the lad's insolence may prove even too much for the forbearance of Washington, and that in an hour of just indignation he may consent to cross swords with the young fellow who has been like a brother to him. It is all so life-like, so spirited, that we forget the false chronology of placing Colonel Washington's engagement before Braddock's expedition; forget, indeed, that the whole incident is a fabrication of the novelist, and rejoice heartily over the dénouement when stout Mrs. Mountain arrives breathless upon the scene of action, riding Madam Esmond's pony, to announce that she has made a mistake, that it is the little widow Curtis [Custis], not Madam Esmond, whom Colonel Washington is to marry." We know that the victorious expedition against Fort Duquesne intervened between Washington's engagement and his marriage, as he left his betrothed after their second interview for the scene of action. A note dated Fort Cumberland, July 20, 1758, is the only love-

Digitized by Google

letter that has come down to us from this period.

We have begun our march to the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as to another Self. That All-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your faithful and ever affectionate friend,

G. WASHINGTON.

So runs this straightforward, manly missive, which bears no trace of the influence of a volume called Epistles to Ladies, which was found among Washington's books, nor is there anything formal or studied about the other love-letters, so-called, which belong to this period and have been so much discussed of late years that it seems inadvisable to pass them over without a word of comment. Several authorities, among them Mrs. Burton Harrison, who, as a member of the Fairfax family, has had excellent opportunities to get at the truth of the matter, say that the first of these letters was addressed to Sally Cary, the wife of Washington's friend, George William Fairfax. On the other hand, Dr. Edward D. Neill, who, during an examination of the Fairfax papers,

Digitized by Google

came across the second letter, which is evidently a sequel to the first, stated unhesitatingly that it was addressed to Miss Mary Cary, a younger sister of Mrs. Fairfax. It is quite clear from one of Washington's own letters, written to his friend Robin when he was about seventeen, that it was Miss Mary Cary to whom his thoughts first turned. He speaks of her as "a very agreeable young lady in the same house, Colonel George Fairfax's wife's sister." Whether Washington subsequently transferred his affection to Mrs. Fairfax, or whether Miss Mary Cary continued to be the object of his devotion, it is impossible to decide, excellent authorities being ranged on either side of the question. We are, however, disposed to agree with Dr. Neill, that all the letters were addressed to Miss Cary, feeling at liberty, in the absence of any positive proof, to base our conclusions upon the general character and bearing of the persons involved. Mrs. Fairfax was several years the senior of her alleged lover, was an estimable woman, a warm friend of the Washingtons during their early married life at Mount Vernon, and a valued correspondent during the many years which she spent abroad with her husband. To have addressed love-letters, even of the mild order of those still extant, to the wife of

Digitized by Google

his intimate friend, seems out of all keeping with the loyal nature of Washington. The first of these letters, written in September, 1758, is singularly ambiguous and indirect, and the mention of his betrothed contained in it is so trifling and undignified that it is difficult to believe that it was penned by the writer to whom it is attributed: —

"How joyfully I catch at the happy occasion of renewing a correspondence which I feared was disrelished on your part. . . . In silence I now express my joy; silence, which in some cases, speaks more intelligently than the sweetest eloquence. . . . Attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when — I need not tell you, guess yourself. . . . 'T is true I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case, and further I confess that this lady is known to you as well as she is to one who is too sensible to her charms. . . . I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate, till I am bid to revive them. . . . How impossible this is. . . . There is a destiny which has the control of our actions, not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of human nature. You have drawn me . . . into an honest confession of a simple fact . . . I dare believe you are as happy as you say. I wish I was happy also."

Digitized by Google

The other letter, the one unearthed by Dr. Edward D. Neill, abounds in half-sentimental and half-playful allusions to Addison's Cato, in which, says Dr. Neill, Miss Cary was then playing the part of Marcia, and of which the writer declares "that he would be doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia as she would make," etc. Dr. Neill points out many sentences that admirably fit the case of the lovers, as when Juba exclaims: —

> "And in the shock of charging hosts remember
> What glorious deeds should grace the man who hopes
> For Marcia's love."

To which Marcia replies: —

> "Juba might make the proudest of our sex,
> Any of womankind but Marcia, happy."
> LUCIA. "And why not Marcia?"
> MARCIA. "While Cato lives, his daughter has no right
> To love or hate but as his choice directs."

This last line Dr. Neill finds matched in the history of the lovers, old Mr. Cary having turned a deaf ear to the young soldier's suit for his daughter's hand, because he considered his fortune insufficient. Mr. Edward Everett introduces this letter to Miss Cary into his article in Appletons' Cyclopædia on Washington, but concludes that it was addressed to Mrs. Custis, while Dr. Neill claims that it was written to Miss Cary. Much has been

Digitized by Google

made of this letter, — more, perhaps, than is warranted by the expressions of the writer, which are not those of a lover, unless the opening lines may be so construed: —

DEAR MADAM, — Do we still misunderstand the true meaning of each other's letters? I think it must appear so, though I would feign hope the contrary, as I cannot speak plainer without — but I 'll say no more, and leave you to guess the rest.

This letter is evidently a reply to one from the lady, and sent with the knowledge of her father, as it contains a message to Colonel Cary.

After giving a detailed account of the recent disastrous repulse of Major Grant, Colonel Washington enters into a lively discussion of the news contained in the lady's letter: —

"Your agreeable letter contained these words: 'My sisters and Nancy Gist, who neither of them expect to be here soon after our return from town, desire you to accept their best compliments, &c.'

"Pray, are these ladies upon a matrimonial scheme? Is Miss Fairfax to be transformed into that charming Domestick — a Martin and Miss Cary to a Fa-re? What does Miss Gist turn to — a Cocke. That can't be; we have him here.

"One thing more and then have done. You ask if I am not tired of the length of your letter? No, Madam, I am not, nor never can be while the

Digitized by Google

Lines are an Inch asunder to bring you in haste to the end of the Paper, you may be tired of mine by this. Adieu, dear Madam."

Had Mrs. Custis been looking over the writer's shoulder, she certainly could have made no objection to this badinage, although she might have asked for an explanation, as do readers to-day, of the opening lines of a letter which was penned by her lover only a few months before his marriage to her.

It is to be regretted that the brief note from Fort Cumberland is the only communication from Washington to his betrothed, that has come down to us from the period that intervened between the engagement and the wedding. Mrs. Washington destroyed all these and other letters that passed between her husband and herself, very naturally and properly deeming them too personal and intimate for the world's perusal. To illuminate this period, of which we know so little, they would be invaluable, and they would doubtless prove to us that the young Colonel was as "gallant in love as he was dauntless in war." Passionate by nature Washington certainly was. One of our most distinguish portrait painters read in his face, with its large eye-sockets and great breadth between the eyes, evidences of the strongest passions that belong

Digitized by Google

to humanity; but these passions were held well in hand, especially as he advanced in years. Ardent and enthusiastic he always was, in whatever pursuit he was engaged, whether it was love, war, or hunting. From the days of his hopeless attachment to Miss Grymes, the "Lowland Beauty," to those when he was equally unfortunate in his affection for Miss Fontleroy, Miss Cary, and Miss Philipse, of New York, Washington seems to have been deeply appreciative of the charms and graces of refined womanhood.

In this age of many questions, a query has been started as to why Washington was so frequently rejected, with the satisfactory results that usually attend such questions. One person suggests that he was too modest and diffident to interest ladies; another that he was poor in his early youth; and still another that he had not received a university education in England, — and this before the dawn of the century of the "new woman," when the chief requirements that a Virginia girl exacted of her lover were to be able to ride like a centaur and to dance like a Chesterfield. In both of these elegant accomplishments it is well known that Washington excelled, and also that he clothed his handsome person in the most suitable and becoming

Digitized by Google

attire, if we may judge from the list of goods and articles imported by him, as well as from all descriptions of him that have come down to us.

Mrs. Custis had doubtless heard of the earlier "rejected addresses" of her brave young lover, for the Virginia world of that day was small and eminently social, and Washington was already a distinguished figure in it; but in this important question, as in all else that concerned her own best happiness or that of her children, she showed herself a wise woman. The fact that a few foolish girls, and one purse-proud old Virginia aristocrat, had turned a deaf ear to the suit of the gallant gentleman who now offered her his heart and his hand, did not, for a moment, cause her to doubt that in accepting them she entered into the possession of the best that life could give her.

Mr. Lodge, in his Life of Washington, — which is the most human and balanced portrait of the great soldier that has been given to the reading world, — draws a brilliant picture of the wedding of Colonel Washington and Mrs. Custis, against the quaint and picturesque background of old St. Peter's Church in New Kent County. We do not doubt that the bride was attired in silk, satin, laces and

Digitized by Google

brocade, as Mr. Lodge says, nor that the groom appeared in blue and silver trimmed with scarlet, nor that the buckles upon his knees and upon his shoes were of pure gold, as several descriptions of the costumes are to be found, and as some of the articles worn are still preserved. What we doubt is that the marriage was solemnized in St. Peter's Church. Mr. G. W. P. Custis, who should be an authority upon the subject, does not say that his grandmother and Colonel Washington were married there. He says, indeed, that he failed to find the date of the marriage in the records of the vestry of St. Peter's Church, and simply states the fact that "the Reverend Mr. Mossom, a Cambridge scholar, was the rector who performed the ceremony, it is believed about 1759." The fact that Mr. Custis and others failed to find the marriage record at St. Peter's Church adds to the probability that the ceremony was not performed there.

It seems to be well known that the marriage took place in January, but Mr. Sparks gets at the day of the month in a very roundabout fashion. Mrs. Bache, Dr. Franklin's daughter, in writing to her father in January, 1779, says that she went abroad with General and Mrs. Washington on her father's birthday, the seventeenth of January, and that

Digitized by Google

the General, who danced with her, told her that this was the anniversary of his marriage, just twenty years ago that night. Taking off the eleven days involved in the change of style from the old to the new brings the date to the sixth of January, which Mr. Sparks adopts as the correct one, in which Mr. Lodge follows him, while he follows Lossing in saying that the marriage was at St. Peter's Church. Such accurate local historians as Bishop Meade, Dr. Tyler, President of the William and Mary College, and Mr. W. G. Stanard, of Richmond, have stated that Mrs. Custis was married in her own house in New Kent County. This was also the opinion of Washington Irving, who was writing nearer in time to the event than Mr. Lossing, when it was still possible to consult reliable authorities upon the subject. In speaking of the wedding, he says, "With this campaign (the one that closed with the reduction of Fort Duquesne) ended for the present the military career of Washington. His marriage with Mrs. Custis took place shortly after his return. It was celebrated on the sixth of January, 1759, at the White House, the residence of the bride, in the good old hospitable style of Virginia, amid a joyous assemblage of relations and friends."

Digitized by Google

A brilliant picture, full of life and color, was this Colonial wedding. The great planters from the surrounding country, with their wives and daughters, were present, and all the notables from Williamsburg, their gayly-hued official costumes vying in richness with the gowns of the belles of the capital. To quote from old Cully, one of the negro servants present, who was interrogated by Mr. Custis: —

"And so you remember when Colonel Washington came a courting of your mistress?" said the biographer to old Cully, then in his hundredth year.

"Ay, master, that I do," replied the ancient family servant, who had lived to see five generations. "Great times, sir! great times. Shall never see de like agin."

"And Washington looked like a man, a proper man; hey, Cully?"

"Neber see'd de like sir! neber de likes of him, tho' I 've seen many in my day; so tall, so straight! and then he set a horse and rode with such an air! Ah, sir, he was like no one else! Many of the grandest gentlemen in their gold lace was at the weddin', but none look'd like the man himself."

Even Francis Fauquier, the Governor of Virginia, in his scarlet suit embroidered in

Digitized by Google

gold, with all the bravery of bag-wig and sword, could not bear comparison with the magnificent groom, whose great height was in striking contrast with the small stature of the bride, who must have been somewhat encumbered by the weight and richness of her elaborate costume. She is represented as wearing a white satin quilted petticoat, over which was draped an overskirt of heavy corded silk shot through with threads of silver.[1] Pearl ornaments were in her hair and about her neck, and her high-heeled satin slippers were fastened at the instep with buckles studded with diamonds. This gorgeous little lady was attended by three bridesmaids elaborately attired in the costume of the day. The names of these attendant damsels have not been preserved, but we know that the bride's sister, Anna Maria Dandridge, was not among them, as at the time of the marriage she was Mrs. Burwell Bassett, of Eltham, and among the matrons rather than the maids. We may be sure that Colonel Washington's brothers, his sister Betty, Mrs. Fielding Lewis, with her husband, the Fitzhughs, Fairfaxes,

[1] A bit of Mrs. Washington's wedding dress is still preserved in a pincushion made by Mrs. Lawrence Lewis for Mrs. Sarah Brinton, of Philadelphia. This pincushion, which is now in the possession of Dr. John H. Brinton, is of rich white silk shot through with silver.

Digitized by Google

and others of the Fredericksburg and Mount Vernon neighborhood, were present, and that the bride was bravely supported by her own kinsfolk. Colonel John Dandridge had died three years before, but his two elder sons, William and Bartholomew, were there to stand in his place; and to complete the family group were the ten-year-old Elizabeth, and Mary, a child of three, with her mother, the "dear Mamma" of whom Mrs. Washington speaks so often in her letters.[1]

All accounts of the wedding speak of the bride being driven home in a coach drawn by six horses, guided by liveried black postilions. Beside the coach rode Colonel Washington, upon his favorite horse, richly caparisoned, attended by a number of gentlemen. If, as we believe, the marriage ceremony was performed at the White House, these descriptions of a bridal cavalcade evidently refer to the short wedding journey from the country home of Mrs. Custis to her Williamsburg residence, where, according to many authorities, the honeymoon was spent. Colonel Washington did not take his wife to Mount Vernon imme-

[1] Mr. Alexander Brown, one of the most accurate of Virginia genealogists, says that Colonel John Dandridge was married three times, consequently the "dear Mamma" to whom Mrs. Washington was so tenderly attached was her stepmother. She was, says Mr. Brown, Fanny Taylor, of Henrico.

Digitized by Google

diately after his marriage, as business connected with her large estate and that of her children, and his own public duties as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, made it necessary for the newly-married pair to remain in or near Williamsburg for some months, and the Six Chimney House was certainly a more convenient winter location than the White House.

In none of the discussions with regard to the place and date of this marriage is the certificate mentioned, although Colonel Washington thus refers to it in a letter written from Williamsburg to his London agent, Robert Cary, in May, 1759:—

"The enclosed, is the Minister's certificate of my marriage with Mrs. Martha Custis, properly, as I am told, authenticated. You will, therefore, for the future please to address all your letters, which relate to the affairs of the late Daniel Parke Custis, Esqr., to me, as by Marriage I am entitled to a third part of that estate, and invested likewise with the care of the other two thirds by a decree of our General Court, which I obtained in order to strengthen the power I before had in consequence of my wife's administration."

While absent upon his last campaign, Colonel Washington had been elected to represent Frederick County, and it is in-

Digitized by Google

teresting in the light of modern political methods to have it frankly stated that his election cost him thirty-nine pounds and six shillings, Virginia currency. This sum was probably dispensed upon the hogshead and barrel of punch, the thirty-six gallons of wine, the forty-three gallons of strong beer and cider, and upon the dinner to his friends, all of which items are charged among the election expenses. The election was especially gratifying to Washington, for although he had refused to take his friends' advice and quit his military duties in order to throw the weight of his personal influence into the campaign, he had the satisfaction of being elected, by a large majority, over the three opposing candidates. One of his friends in Williamsburg, writing to him of his election, said, "Your friends have been very sincere, so that you have received more votes than any other candidate. Colonel Ward sat on the bench and represented you, and he was carried around the town in the midst of a general applause, and huzzaing for Colonel Washington."

It was during the session of the House soon after his marriage, when Washington first took his seat, that the incident occurred which was first related by Mr. Wirt. Mr.

Digitized by Google

Robinson, Speaker of the House, thanked the new member for his services to his country, in the eloquent and florid language of the South. Washington arose to reply, and then, utterly unable to speak about himself, stood before his fellow-members blushing and stammering, until the Speaker with ready tact interposed: "Sit down, Mr. Washington, your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

It is an old story, and often repeated; but when it was a fresh, new story, it must have filled with pride the heart of the wife, to whom it was probably told by every one except the chief actor in the little drama! There are only a few expressions of Martha Washington's that reveal her deep and reverent affection for her husband; for, like him, she was more than ordinarily self-contained and reserved.

Digitized by Google

IV

EARLY DAYS AT MOUNT VERNON

As soon as Colonel Washington's official duties permitted, he took his wife and her two children to Mount Vernon, which was ever after a home to them all in the truest sense of the word. Nothing perhaps more perfectly reveals the fine fibre of this man than his attitude toward his step-children, whose interests he made his own from the first. In writing and speaking of them, Washington always said "the children," never "Mrs. Washington's children," and seldom "my step-children," as if the feeling of proprietorship was a pleasant part of his relation toward them. By a decree of the court he was made guardian to John and Martha Custis, a duty which involved the care of their estate, a not inconsiderable one. This obligation Washington discharged with his habitual faithfulness and accuracy, bestowing upon them, at the same time, the affection of a generous and tender, if not actively demonstrative nature.

What it must have been to Martha Washington to have her children so loved and cared

Digitized by Google

for, we can readily imagine. Although from the dark clouds that had early shadowed her pathway she emerged when scarcely more than a girl into the sunshine of a happy second marriage, the influence of her former sad experiences pervaded her whole life, making her always a most anxious wife and mother.

Of Washington's sympathy with his wife in her maternal anxieties we find many proofs. When young Custis was studying with Dr. Bouchier, in Annapolis, arrangements were made to have the boy undergo the trying process of inoculation for small-pox, without his mother's knowledge. A letter is still extant in which the step-father gives Dr. Bouchier the most explicit directions with regard to the management of the affair, requesting him to write him of Master Custis's progress, under cover to Lund Washington, and in a hand not his own, adding, "that Mrs. Washington had often wished that Jack would take and go through the disorder without her knowing it, that she might escape those tortures which suspense would throw her into, little as the cause might be for them."

Mrs. Washington's family letters abound in references to her children's health and her solicitude about her "dear Mamma," yet there is in them no trace of a morbid or unhealthful

Digitized by Google

dwelling upon, or anticipation of trouble; on the contrary there is every reason to believe that she entered heartily into the pleasures and ambitions of the new life that opened before her. In one of her letters to her sister, Mrs. Burwell Bassett, written in the second year of her marriage, she dwells upon the enjoyments and gayeties of the Mount Vernon neighborhood, and of her own and her children's improved health, assuring her family that they will find her "a fine, healthy girl" when she goes to Williamsburg in the autumn. Colonel Washington's official position rendered it important that he and his wife should take part in social functions of the capital, which they evidently did, as we learn from their letters and from Washington's diary that Mrs. Washington often accompanied him when he went to Williamsburg to attend the sessions of the House of Burgesses. This annual or semi-annual visit afforded her an opportunity of meeting her New Kent County relatives; and that they, in turn, visited Mount Vernon, is proved by numerous allusions to such visits. Colonel Washington records more than one hunt in Mr. Bassett's company, and in a letter written to Mrs. Bassett in June, 1760, Mrs. Washington speaks with much pleasure of a recent visit from

Digitized by Google

her brother-in-law, adding, "Mr. Bassett will inform you of the mirth and gayety that he has seen, so I hope I have no occasion to enlarge in order to induce you to try Fairfax in a pleasanter season than you did last time."[1]

Another letter to the same sister, indeed all Mrs. Washington's letters seem to have been written to this most dear Nancy, is interesting and characteristic.

MT. VERNON Aug 28 1762

MY DEAR NANCY, — I had the pleasure to receive your kind letter of the 25 of July just as I was setting out on a visit to Mr Washington in Westmoreland whare I spent a weak very agreabley I carred my little patt with me and left Jackey at home for a trial to see how well I coud stay without him though we ware gon but won fortnight I was quite impatiant to get home. If I at aney time heard the doggs barke or a noise out, I thought thair was a person sent for me.

I often fancied he was sick or some accident had happened to him so that I think it is impossible for me to leave him as long as Mr Washington must stay when he comes down — If nothing happens I promise myself the pleasure of comeing down in the spring as it will be a healthy time of the year. I am very much obliged to you for your

[1] From the original in the Dreer Collection in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Digitized by Google

kind invatation and assure yourself nothing but my childrens interest should prevent me the sattisfaiton of seeing you and my good Friends I am always thinking of and wish it was possable for me to spend more of my time amongst. It gave me great sattisfaction to hear of your dear billy's recovery which I hope will be a lasting wone; you mentioned in your letter that Col More intended hear but we have seen nothing of him. We heard at Fredericksburg that he and my brother had been thaire but no higher. I should [have] been very glad to [have] seen them heare. We all injoy very good health at preasent, I think patty seems to be quite well now, Jackey is very thin but in good health, and learn thaire books very fast. I am sorry to hear you are unwell but hope your Complaint is slight. I have no news worth telling you.

We are daly expect[ing] the kind laydes of Maryland to visit us. I must begg you will not lett the fright you had given you prevent you comeing to see me again — If I coud leave my children in as good Care as you can I would never let Mr W——n come down without me — Please to give my love to Miss Judy and your little babys and make my best compliments to Mr Bassett and Mrs Dawson

I am with sincere regard
dear sister
yours most affectionately
MARTHA WASHINGTON [1]

(MRS. BASSETT)

[1] Original in possession of Mr. Curtis Guild of Boston.

Digitized by Google

To Washington these years of peace and prosperity at Mount Vernon, with a congenial companion, who sympathized with him in his love of country pursuits, and was ready to enter with him into a round of homely duties and simple pleasures, must have been the happiest and most care-free in all his anxious and responsible career. Not that these were days of idleness to either husband or wife, for although both were well endowed with worldly goods, personal ease and self-indulgence seem never to have entered into their thoughts. Mrs. Washington was a notable and painstaking housekeeper, and at home dressed with the simplicity that suited her active and useful life. When she went abroad with her husband in Williamsburg, or drove to Annapolis or Alexandria in her chariot and four, with black postilions in the white and scarlet livery of the Washington family, she attired herself richly and in a style becoming her station. Indeed, both of those young people seem to have possessed a fine sense of the fitness of things. If Washington desired his clothes, which were ordered in London through his kinsman, Richard Washington, to be plain, without embroidery or lace, he was particular about the quality of the cloth, the manner in which these garments fitted his fine figure, and

Digitized by Google

was careful to state that the buttons should be of gold or silver.

For Mrs. Washington, her husband sent sumptuous orders to the same agent. Among the articles upon the lists written by him are "a salmon-colored tabby velvet of the enclosed pattern, with satin flowers, to be made in a sack and coat, ruffles to be made of Brussels lace or Point, proper to be worn with the above *negligee*, to cost £20; 2 pairs of white silk hose; 1 pair white satin shoes of the smallest fives; 1 fashionable hat or bonnet; 6 pairs woman's best kid gloves; 6 pairs mitts; 1 dozen breast-knots; 1 dozen most fashionable cambric pocket handkerchiefs; 6 pounds perfumed powder; a puckered petticoat of fashionable color; a silver tabby velvet petticoat; handsome breast flowers; sugar candy;" and as if arranged to mislead the custom-house officials of those days, the following curious entry, "a piece of lace or linen pinned to the top of a woman's stays."

For Master Custis, aged eight years, and for Miss Custis, aged six years, numerous garments and ornaments were ordered. For the former a silver-laced hat, silver knee and shoe buckles; and for his sister "a coat made of fashionable silk," and various frocks of lawn and cambric; "6 pairs of white kid gloves,

Digitized by Google

handsome egrettes of different sorts;" and alas for the health of the delicate, growing child! "one pair of pack thread stays."

With these articles of luxury and fashion, fashionable being a word in frequent use with the grave and earnest Washington, we find a proper corrective in the form of an order for "a small Bible neatly bound in Turkey, and John Parke Custis wrote in gilt letters in the inside of the cover; and a neat, small Prayer Book, bound as above, with John Parke Custis, as above," duplicates of these books being ordered for little Miss Custis.

These London orders, and others, were given with the exactness and attention to the most minute details, which were characteristic of all Washington's business affairs. His account books, of which there were many, are models of accuracy and neatness; and never did Mrs. Washington get a pair of stockings or a dozen cotton handkerchiefs for her maids, or as many linen kerchiefs for herself, or a hat and feather for Miss Custis, but it was straightway set down upon its own especial page of the account book, under its own date.

Washington's letters and diaries are filled with accounts of his experiments in farming, in draining, ditching, hedging, and in fertilizing the rather poor soil of his estate, and the

Digitized by Google

fact that barrels of flour stamped "George Washington, Mount Vernon," were exempted from inspection in the West India ports, was a distinction of which the owner was as proud as of his military honors. While her husband was actively engaged upon his farms, Mrs. Washington, like the model woman of the Proverbs, "looked well to the ways of her household," and both seem to have delighted to "rise while it was yet night."

More than one contemporaneous chronicler has recorded that the master of Mount Vernon always rose betimes, usually at four o'clock in the morning, making his own fire in the winter season, in this way, as he himself explained, accomplishing a day's work while others slept. Mrs. Washington, not to be outdone by her spouse, gave many of her household orders before breakfast, thus securing leisure for her devotions, which always occupied the first hour after breakfast, for her gardening, her needlework, her charities, and, above all, time to attend to the health and education of her children, and to receive and entertain the numerous guests who were constantly arriving at the Mansion House, as the Mount Vernon property was called to distinguish it from the adjacent farms.

The personal supervision of an estate of

Digitized by Google

over four thousand acres of land, upon whose various farms, named Muddy Hill, River, Dogue Run, and Union, more than two hundred negroes were employed, would in itself seem sufficient to engage the energies of the most active landlord. In the care and training of the negroes, especially those employed about the Mansion House, Mrs. Washington assisted her husband. The welfare of these slaves, of whom one hundred and fifty had been a part of her dower; their clothing, much of which was woven and made upon the estate; their comfort, especially when ill; and their instruction in sewing, knitting, and other housewifely arts, engaged much of Mrs. Washington's time and thought.

We cannot wonder that these busy people never found the days too long. Our only cause for wonder is that they had time and strength left for the large amount of sociability and pleasure that entered into their lives. Although Washington, in addition to all his duties at home and abroad, planted and grafted several hundred trees in one season, and entered in his diary, with great satisfaction, the fact that he had set a plough of his own invention to work in the lower pasture, he seems always to have had leisure to go about with his wife to dinners, chris-

Digitized by Google

tenings, and other neighborhood festivities. One day he records that he "set off with Mrs. Washington and Patcy, Mr. W[arner] Washington and wife, Mrs. Bushrod and Miss Washington and Mr. Magowen for 'Towelston,' in order to stand for Mr. B. Fairfax's third son, which I did with my wife, Mr. Warner Washington and his lady." Another day he returns from attending to the purchase of Western lands to find that Colonel Bassett, his wife and children, have arrived during his absence, "Billy and Nancy and Mr. Warner Washington being here also." The next day the gentlemen go a-hunting together, Mr. Bryan Fairfax having joined them for the hunt and the dinner that followed.

So the days went by, the serious business of life being interspersed with many pleasures, especially in the hunting season, when Washington spent days together in pursuit of the fox, which he sometimes joyfully records that he "catched." At other times, he joined his neighbors in fishing or in shooting the canvas-back, in which the shores of the Potomac abounded at certain seasons.

Mr. Irving speaks of water parties upon the Potomac in these palmy days, when Mr. Digges would receive his guests in a barge rowed by six negroes arrayed in a uniform whose dis-

Digitized by Google

tinguishing features were check shirts and black velvet caps. At one time, he says, "the whole neighborhood was thrown into a paroxysm of festivity by the anchoring of the British frigate [the Boston] in the river, just in front of the hospitable mansion of the Fairfaxes. A succession of dinners and breakfasts takes place at Mount Vernon and Belvoir, with occasional tea parties on board of the frigate."

During the hunting season, the Virginia planter kept open house for weeks at a time. In the exercise of such hospitality the Washingtons did their full share. Some authorities state that Mrs. Washington and the ladies visiting her at times rode with the hounds. This may be true; but from what we know of Mrs. Washington, it would seem much more to her taste to stay at home and superintend the preparation of delectable dishes to set before the hungry hunters, than to career over the fields after them in a scarlet habit.

If Washington recorded in his diary that he and Mrs. Washington and Mr. and Miss Custis dined one day at Belvoir with the Fairfaxes, there were many other days when the Fairfaxes, Masons, Diggeses, Lewises and other neighbors dined at Mount Vernon. We can imagine Mrs. Washington's housewifely pride,

Digitized by Google

when she welcomed these guests to her sumptuously spread table, especially when Mr. Mason of Gunston Hall, or his Lordship from Greenway Court commended her good cheer. Those were days when the highest lady in the land prided herself upon her culinary skill; and while the gentlemen lingered over their wine, as they were too prone to linger, the fair dames would gather around their hostess in the drawing-room, or upon the lovely terraces overlooking the river, to indulge in neighborly gossip over their fragrant Bohea, and to exchange recipes. Those of Mrs. Washington were, we may be sure, in great request, having about them, in addition to their own excellence, a fine flavor of the Williamsburg aristocracy.

Warm-hearted, open-handed hospitality was constantly exercised at Mount Vernon, and if the master humbly recorded that, although he owned a hundred cows, he had sometimes to buy butter for his family, the entry seems to have been made in no spirit of fault-finding.

A pleasant little story is told of later days, when the Washingtons were often away from home, and Lund Washington was superintendent at the Mansion House. The General seems to have taken Lund to task for the amount of bacon which the smoke-house con-

Digitized by Google

tained, to which the latter replied, with ready tact and *naïveté:* "When I put it up, I expected Mrs. Washington would have lived at home, if you did not; and was I to judge the future from the past consumption, there would have been a use for it, — for I believe Mrs. Washington's charitable disposition increases in the same proportion with her meat house." To the logical excuses of his genial kinsman Washington made no reply, for, great general that he was, he was wise enough to appreciate the fact that in domestic matters he could not always be commander-in-chief.

As Martha Custis advanced toward womanhood she became interested in the good works that occupied so much of her mother's time, and the beautiful face of the "dark lady," as she was called, in consequence of her brunette complexion and dark eyes, was known and loved in many homes of sorrow and suffering. Washington was deeply attached to this lovely girl, whose gentleness and sweetness strongly appealed to his manly nature. It is evident that he realized, even if Mrs. Washington did not, the cloud that was soon to darken the sunshine of their happy home. In 1769, he wrote to Colonel Armstrong from the Warm Springs of Virginia, whither he had gone with Mrs. Washington and her daughter, "the lat-

Digitized by Google

ter," he said, "being troubled with a complaint, which the efficacy of these waters it is thought might remove." The waters not proving of service, and the medical skill of that day being powerless to check the progress of the insidious malady, which seems, from all accounts, to have been consumption, Patsy Custis, as she was called, declined slowly but surely.

No picture of the Washingtons in their home would be complete without some mention of the sincere religious feeling that characterized their private and public life. Washington was a vestryman at Christ Church, Alexandria, and in Truro Parish, in the rebuilding of whose church he had taken an active interest. This latter church, Pohick, being within easy distance of Mount Vernon, was usually attended by the Washington family. During the war this church seems to have fallen into disuse, and after their return to their home, in 1783, General and Mrs. Washington attended Christ Church, Alexandria. That this couple combined active and systematic benevolence with their other religious duties is evident from the following directions sent by the General to his cousin Lund after Mrs. Washington's departure for Cambridge: "Let the hospitality of the house

Digitized by Google

with respect to the poor be kept up. Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessaries, provided it does not encourage them to idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year where you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire it should be done. You are to consider that neither myself nor wife, is now in the way to do those good offices."

Digitized by Google

V

THE SHADOW OF COMING EVENTS

INTO this old Virginia life, full of the pleasant stir of business and the genial exchange of visits and neighborly courtesies, there crept murmurs of discontent, low in the beginning, then louder and bolder. First came the Stamp Act, which pressed hard upon the planter of Virginia, as upon the farmer and merchant of Massachusetts, and upon the importer and manufacturer of Pennsylvania; then the voice of Patrick Henry as of a prophet crying in the wilderness, speedily followed by the dissolving of the Virginia House of Burgesses; then compromise, and that period of nearly ten years when the cry was "Peace, peace; when there was no peace," for resistance was in the thoughts of men and war was in the air.

All these signs of the times were watched with eager interest by the little family at Mount Vernon, and were talked over at their hunts and dinners by Washington and his neighbors. Although he numbered among his

Digitized by Google

associates many advanced patriots, he had warm friends upon the other side of the question, among these Lord Fairfax and Bryan Fairfax, beside which he had always held pleasant unofficial relations with the several governors of the Colony.

When Richard Henry Lee, an old Westmoreland friend, and Edmund Pendleton and fiery young Patrick Henry and George Mason of Gunston Hall, author of the famous Bill of Rights, met the Fairfaxes around the dinner table at Mount Vernon, we can well believe that the debate ran high and lasted long. Many of these discussions naturally took place in Mrs. Washington's presence, and although an habitually quiet woman in company, taking no leading part in general conversation, "she treasured these things and pondered them in her heart;" and when the time came for action, was ready to take her stand.

George Mason prepared his non-importation agreements for Virginia at Washington's request; the latter laid them before the House of Burgesses, and thenceforth none of the articles taxed by the English government were imported for the Mount Vernon household. Although Arthur Lee wrote from London of the "increased orders for fineries" from the ladies of Williamsburg during the administra-

Digitized by Google

tion of Governor Botetourt, many luxuries of the toilet and household, which from long use had come to seem like necessities, were tabooed, along with the fragrant cup of tea dear to the heart of the Colonial matron North and South. In their patriotic desire to starve the traders and manufacturers of the mother country, Mrs. Washington, who would not have the heart to starve her direst foe within her own gates, heartily co-operated with her husband and his colleagues. The spinning wheels and carding and weaving machines were set to work with fresh spirit at Mount Vernon. It seemed, indeed, as if some of the patriotism of the mistress of the mansion was woven into the threads of the cloth of which she was so proud, and which she wore so frequently during the war. Some years later, in New Jersey, Mrs. Washington told a friend that she often kept sixteen spinning wheels in constant operation, and at one time Lund Washington spoke of an even larger number. Two of her own dresses, of cotton striped with silk, Mrs. Washington showed with great pride, explaining that the silk stripes in the fabric were made from the ravellings of brown silk stockings and old crimson damask chair covers. Her coachman, footman and maid were all attired in domestic cloth, excepting the coachman's scarlet cuffs,

Digitized by Google

which she took care to state had been imported before the war. These simple homespun garments contrasted strongly with the rich brocades and delicate embroidered muslins which Colonel Washington delighted to import for his wife's use, and in which she was wont to array herself, with great splendor, when she dined with a neighbor, or drove to Alexandria with her family to attend a ball or the play.

The pleasant social life at Mount Vernon, and even the active interest of the family in public events, were eclipsed for a time by the illness and rapid decline of the lovely young daughter of the house, Martha Custis. Although she had been more or less delicate for several years, Patsy's health suddenly became a cause of keen anxiety to her parents.

In addition to her anxiety about her daughter's health, the future of John Custis was a source of much solicitude to Mrs. Washington and his guardian.

He, who was afterwards the most devoted and satisfactory of sons, in these early years seems to have been wayward, vacillating, and unsettled. In 1771, his inclination drew him strongly toward a European tour, to which his step-father objected, feeling that his education had not advanced sufficiently to enable him to get the full benefit of such a trip. In a

Digitized by Google

letter written to Dr. Bouchier, he says that, although young Custis knew something of Latin, he knew nothing of Greek, nor of French, the latter so necessary for a traveller on the Continent. Mrs. Washington, mother-like, was ready to put aside her own fears and desires if her son were determined upon the voyage, and if it should be judged for his benefit. Fortunately, for the sake of the tender mother's heart, soon to be shadowed by a great sorrow, Jacky Custis suddenly abandoned his European project. Whether or not it was the *beaux yeux* of fair Eleanor Calvert that first drew him away from thoughts of roving abroad, these same lovely eyes soon came in between him and book learning, until his guardian, realizing that Annapolis was too near the Calverts' home for the young student to continue his studies to any purpose, carried him off to King's College, New York.

Eleanor Calvert, a beautiful and charming girl, was the daughter of Benedict Calvert, of Mount Airy, Maryland, a man of wealth, distinction, and high social connections, being a lineal descendant of the first Lord Baltimore. Nothing could have been more gratifying to Mrs. Washington than such a marriage for her son. The only obstacle in the way was the extreme youth of the pair. John Custis was

Digitized by Google

about seventeen at this time and Eleanor Calvert two or three years his junior. When it was discovered that the young couple had taken matters into their own hands and formed a matrimonial engagement without the knowledge of their parents, Colonel Washington sent the young lady's father a letter, which must have been exceedingly difficult to write, but which was so replete with the sound logic of common sense, so courteous in its expressions, and so appreciative of the sentiments of the young people and of the charms of the little maiden, that she must have loved her future step-father from the moment of its arrival. In this letter the writer says: "I should think myself wanting in candor were I not to confess that Miss Nelly's amiable qualities are acknowledged on all hands, and that an alliance with your family will be pleasing to his." He then speaks of the unfinished education of the youthful lover, mentions with dignity his worldly advantages in lands, slaves and moneys, and concludes by proposing an engagement of two years' duration. This letter was written in April, 1773. The Calverts and the young couple apparently acquiescing in its most sensible terms, Colonel Washington took John Custis to New York himself, and after entering him at King's College, for a two

Digitized by Google

years' course, stopped at Philadelphia to enjoy the meetings of the Jockey Club, to attend several festivities, and above all, to meet the prominent men of the day, and learn from them the feeling of Pennsylvania with regard to the important public questions of the hour.

Upon his return to Mount Vernon, Washington set out for Williamsburg, having an engagement with the Governor to accompany him upon a tour to the western frontier of Virginia. From this business he was suddenly recalled by an alarming message from home, which he only reached in time to have his dearly loved ward, and adopted daughter, breathe her last in his arms. The great strong nature, that knew not how to love lightly, was shaken to its foundations by the passing from their midst of the gentle spirit of Patsy Custis. "Her delicate health," says a family chronicler, "or perhaps her fond affection for the only father she had ever known, so endeared her to the 'general,' that he knelt at her dying bed, and with a passionate burst of tears prayed aloud that her life might be spared, unconscious that even then her spirit had departed."

Washington at once relinquished his trip to the Ohio with Lord Dunmore, and remained at home to console his wife. The following

Digitized by Google

letter, written to his brother-in-law, reveals his own grief and his tender consideration for the even deeper sorrow of Mrs. Washington: —

MOUNT VERNON, 20d June 1773

DEAR SIR, — It is an easier matter to conceive, than to describe the distress of this Family; especially that of the unhappy Parent of our Dear Patsy Custis, when I inform you that yesterday removed the Sweet Innocent Girl [who] Entered into a more happy & peaceful abode than any she has met with in the afflicted Path she hitherto has trod.

She rose from Dinner about four o'clock in better health and Spirits than she appeared to have been in for some time; soon after which, she was seized with one of her usual Fits, & expired in it, in less than two minutes without uttering a word, a groan, or scarce a sigh. — This sudden, and unexpected blow, I scarce need add, has almost reduced my poor Wife to the lowest ebb of Misery; which is encreas'd by the absence of her son, (whom I have just fixed at the College in New York from whence I returned the 8th Inst) and want of the balmy consolation of her Relations; which leads me more than ever to wish she could see them, and that I was Master of Arguments powerful enough to prevail upon Mrs. Dandridge to make this place her entire & absolute home. I should think as she lives a lonesome life (Betsey being married) it might suit her well, & be agreeable,

Digitized by Google

both to herself & my Wife, to me, most assuredly, it would. I do not purpose to add more at present, the end of my writing being only to inform you of this unhappy change.

From these expressions with regard to Mrs. John Dandridge, it would appear that she was a *rara avis* among mothers-in-law, as well as a much loved step-mother.

After the death of her daughter, Mrs. Washington's affections and hopes naturally centred in her only son, to whom she was extremely indulgent, often pleading in his behalf when his guardian thought it important to exercise wholesome restraint upon him. It may have been in consequence of this tender, if misguided, maternal intervention, that "Jacky" was allowed to return home after a three months' instead of a two years' sojourn at King's College. Being now near the object of his affections, it was not to be expected that the agreement in regard to the duration of the engagement would continue to hold good. Consequently, with the consent of the parents on both sides, and apparently to their great satisfaction, John Parke Custis and Eleanor Calvert were married at Mount Airy, on the third day of February, 1774. A portrait of the bride, painted a short time before her marriage, represents

Digitized by Google

a young girl with a charming open countenance, of slight figure, attired in a riding habit and wearing a boy's hat upon her pretty head.

Colonel Washington attended the wedding of his ward, but Mrs. Washington was still feeling the recent death of her daughter too keenly to enter into the gayeties of the hour. By the hands of her husband, she sent the following tender and motherly greeting to the little bride: —

MY DEAR NELLY, — God took from Me a Daughter when June Roses were blooming — He has now given me another daughter, about her Age when Winter winds are blowing, to warm my Heart again. I am as Happy as One so Afflicted and so Blest can be. Pray receive my Benediction and a wish that you may long live the Loving Wife of my happy Son, and a Loving Daughter of

Your Affectionate Mother

M. WASHINGTON.[1]

Wisdom was justified of her children in this instance, for what may at the time have been considered womanly weakness and over-indulgence on the part of Mrs. Washington, proved a measure worthy of the wisest head. It seemed as if "Jacky" Custis, who possessed

[1] Copied by Mr. Lossing from the original at Arlington House, in 1860.

Digitized by Google

a generous and affectionate nature, only needed a good wife to anchor him fast to love and duty at home, and to incite him to good citizenship and patriotism abroad.

Life opened brightly for this young couple. Handsome, well born, and amply endowed with worldly goods, it seemed as if fortune had nothing more to offer them. Their home at Abingdon, on the Potomac, a part of the estate of John Custis, which lay not far from Mount Vernon, became a new centre of happiness and interest to Mrs. Washington. In the pleasant spring days of 1774, when the two families were like the birds engaged in the cheerful business of home making, there came ominous tidings from Williamsburg, which called Colonel Washington thither.

The mutterings of discontent through all the Colonies had grown louder and more insistent. The Virginia Resolutions were unequivocal and produced a decided effect abroad, as well as at home, where the crisis was precipitated by the news of the enforcement of the Boston Port Bill, and by the arbitrary proceedings of Lord Dunmore.

Disposed to surround himself with much ceremony and state, Governor Dunmore had been unpopular from the hour of his arrival in Virginia, and now became intolerable when

Digitized by Google

he showed his determination to treat patriots like unreasoning children of monarchy, and to crush out what he was pleased to consider the spirit of rebellion under the iron heel of royal authority.

Colonel Washington was much in Williamsburg during these stirring times, paying his court to the new Governor, as was his duty, and attending the ball given in honor of the arrival of Lady Dunmore and her daughter at the Old Capitol; but by no means failing to assist at a meeting of the Burgesses held the next morning in the "Appolo room" of the Raleigh Tavern, where resolutions were passed in favor of a congress of delegates from all the Colonies.

Whether Mrs. Washington was with her husband in Williamsburg, or at Mount Vernon at this time, we do not know; probably at the latter place, as she seems to have lived in great retirement after the death of her daughter, avoiding all public ceremonies. Wherever she was, we may be sure that earnest prayers for her country, and for her own and her husband's guidance in these hours of trial, were offered by this devout woman. If George Mason desired the elder children of his "dear little family to attend church in mourning" on the day appointed for fasting and prayer,

Digitized by Google

the solemn season was no less strictly observed at Mount Vernon. That Washington kept the day we learn from his own words; and as Mr. Lodge says, in commenting upon Lord Dunmore's attitude at this critical period, "He might well have reflected, which he undoubtedly failed to do, that when men of the George Washington type fast and pray on account of political misdoings, it is well for their opponents to look to it carefully." Yet even in this period of anxiety Washington's cheerfulness does not seem to have deserted him, or his zest for his favorite amusements when occasion offered.

It was at this time, when many prudent persons held back, and when those who pressed forward felt that they were taking a step in the dark, that Mrs. Washington showed her strength of character and her implicit confidence in her husband's judgment. Her heart must have been filled with anxious forebodings when, in September, 1774, she saw him preparing to leave his home to attend the General Congress in Philadelphia. Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton, colleagues of Washington's in the Virginia delegation, spent a day and night with him at Mount Vernon on their way to Philadelphia. Writing to a friend of this visit, Mr. Pendleton said: —

Digitized by Google

"I was much pleased with Mrs. Washington and her spirit. She seemed ready to make any sacrifice and was cheerful though I know she felt anxious. She talked like a Spartan mother to her son on going to battle. 'I hope you will all stand firm — I know George will,' she said. The dear little woman was busy from morning until night with domestic duties, but she gave us much time in conversation and affording us entertainment. When we set off in the morning, she stood in the door and cheered us with the good words, 'God be with you gentlemen.'"

With such courageous words upon her lips, Martha Washington saw her husband set forth upon an errand, hazardous in the extreme, which, if successful, meant long contention, probable recourse to arms, and if unsuccessful, the possible loss of life and the almost certain confiscation of large estates, such as theirs. Yet, in the face of these alternatives, to a kinswoman who bewailed the "folly" of the undertaking, she wrote that she foresaw consequences, dark days and darker nights; domestic happiness suspended; social enjoyments abandoned and property of every kind put in jeopardy by war perhaps, adding, "But what are all these evils when compared with the fate of which the Port Bill may be only a threat? My mind is made up; my heart is in the cause."

Digitized by Google

One writer speaks of Mrs. Washington as "a sympathetic companion to her distinguished husband," and Mr. Woodrow Wilson very truly names her a "staunch lady;" but no person who has written of this woman has done justice to her high courage and unswerving patriotism. Not Mercy Warren, or Abigail Adams of Massachusetts, or Annis Stockton of New Jersey, or Margaret Schuyler of New York, or Mary Morris, or Sarah Bache, of Pennsylvania, was more zealous in the cause of liberty than Martha Washington of Virginia. None of these, with the exception of Mrs. Morris, had as much at stake in worldly goods; none gave more of what the heart holds dearest, for when the hour and the cause demanded his service, she, the tenderest of mothers, gave her only son to the hazardous enterprise in which her husband was engaged.

When Washington returned from the sessions of this first Congress, he doubtless told his family of the effect produced by the Virginia delegation in that historic gathering in Carpenter's Hall, dwelling upon the honor shown to Peyton Randolph and the acknowledged leadership of his colleagues, Lee and Patrick Henry; but we may be sure that he found no words in which to tell them how his

Digitized by Google

own sound judgment and soldierly bearing had impressed the delegates from North and South.

To the next Congress, that of May, 1775, Washington set forth in his uniform of a Virginia colonel. This circumstance, while it plainly revealed his own attitude of mind, must in some measure have prepared the wife at home for a letter, which she soon after received, — a letter which for manliness, tenderness and modesty has seldom been equalled by lover or husband.

This letter was written from Philadelphia, on June 18, 1775: —

My Dearest, — I now sit down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my Care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it. You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and

Digitized by Google

that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking is designed to answer some good purpose. You might and I suppose did, perceive from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment without exposing my character to such censures as would have reflected dishonor upon myself and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall. I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the Campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this and to hear it from your own pen.

With this letter Washington enclosed his will, adding, "the provision made for you

Digitized by Google

in case of my death will, I hope, be agreeable."[1]

"To be the strength, the inmost joy, of a man who, within the conditions of his life, seems to you a hero at every turn — there is no happiness more penetrating for a wife than this." So writes an eminent modern novelist of the higher joys of married life. To few women was granted such happiness and pride in fuller measure than to Martha Washington. In all that she did, or said, or wrote, she showed her full appreciation of her husband's character and aims, and her own earnest desire to set her life in the same high key.

Of what married life was to Washington we may gather from numerous expressions in his letters, from his reluctance to quit the congenial atmosphere of his home, and from his sympathetic interest in the love affairs of his young officers. A letter of congratulation, written to the Marquis de Chastellux, nearly thirty years after his own marriage, contains, beneath its good-humored bantering, an undercurrent of such deep content that we are tempted to quote a passage from it in answer to those who have of late spoken of Washington's marriage as one of convenience, as a step

[1] Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, by G. W. P. Custis.

Digitized by Google

toward his advancement in life, in which his affections were not seriously engaged.

"In reading your very friendly and acceptable letter of the 21st December, 1787, which came to hand by the last mail, I was as you may well suppose, not less delighted than surprised to come across the plain American word 'my wife.' A wife! well, my dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find that you are caught at last. I saw by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life in America, that you had swallowed the bait, and that you would as surely be taken, (one day or other,) as you was a philosopher and a soldier.

"So your day has at length come: I am glad of it with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you; now you are well served for coming to fight in favour of the American Rebels, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible contagion, which, like the small-pox, or the plague, a man can only have once in his life, because it lasts him, (at least with us in America — I don't know how you manage these matters in France,) for his whole lifetime."

Digitized by Google

VI

A JOURNEY TO CAMBRIDGE

General Washington's hope, expressed in his letter to his wife upon taking command of the army, that he should return to her in the fall, was not realized; indeed, during the eight years to follow he only visited twice the home that was so dear to him. In October, 1775, Lund Washington, who was left in charge of Mount Vernon, wrote to his kinsman: —

"'T is true that many people have made a stir about Mrs. Washington's continuing at Mount Vernon, but I cannot think her in any sort of danger. The thought I believe originated in Alexandria. From thence it got to Loudoun. I am told the people of Loudoun talked of setting a guard to conduct her into Berkeley, with some of their principal men to persuade her to leave this and accept their offer. Mr. John Augustine Washington wrote to her pressing her to leave Mount Vernon. She does not believe herself in danger, nor do I. Without they attempt to take her in the dead of night, they would fail, for ten

Digitized by Google

minutes notice would be sufficient for her to get out of the way. Lord Dunmore will hardly venture himself up this River, nor can I think he will send up on that errand. Surely, her old acquaintance, the attorney[1] (who with his family are aboard his ship) would put him off doing an act of that kind. I have never advised her to stay, nor indeed to go. Col. Bassett thinks her in no danger. She sets off next week with her son and daughter down to the country."

Again, on October 15, he wrote:

"Mrs. Washington, I believe, was in no apprehension of Lord Dunmore's doing her an injury, until your mentioning it in several of your last letters. She intended to set off tomorrow down the country. I proposed to her to put whatever she thought most valuable into trunks, and should there be a necessity to move them, it will be sooner done. She will stay tomorrow and do it. Your papers are among the things which will be put up, etc."

The thought of Lord Dunmore carrying off Mrs. Washington, either at dead of night or at high noon, seems equally absurd in the retrospect; but to Virginians, who knew their ex-Governor as a desperate and vindictive foe, ravaging their shores "in search of what he might devour," the idea of his despoiling

[1] John Randolph, who accompanied Lord Dunmore.

Digitized by Google

Mount Vernon, obtaining forcible possession of the wife of the leader of the rebellious army and holding her as a hostage, appeared quite within the bounds of possibility.

That such fears were not groundless was proved by Dunmore's later excursions along the coast, his bombardment and burning of the town of Norfolk, and by a last desperate attempt made by him upon Mount Vernon in July, 1776, when the Prince William County militia and a furious storm of wind and rain drove the marauders forever from the shores of Virginia.

Although Mrs. Washington seems to have had no fears for her own safety in those autumn days, the General was evidently anxious about her, and her good friend and neighbor, Mr. George Mason, considered her position dangerous, as he sent her a message early one morning advising her to retire into the country away from the coast. In writing to Washington of this alarm, Mr. Mason, said: —

"I sent my family many miles back in the country, and advised Mrs. Washington to do likewise, as a prudential movement. At first she said 'No; I will not desert my post;' but she finally did so with reluctance, rode only a few miles, and plucky little woman as she is, stayed away only one night."

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Washington and her son and daughter were at Mr. Bassett's, in New Kent County, when her husband's message asking her to join him at Cambridge reached her. Lund Washington wrote to the General that she would no doubt set off at once, as "she has often declared she would go to camp if you would permit her." The invitation, as Mrs. Washington ceremoniously called her husband's proposal to her to join him, was accepted, and, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Custis and a maid, she set forth, a few days later, upon her long journey northward. The Washington chariot, drawn by four horses, with a black coachman and a postilion in white and scarlet livery, naturally attracted much attention as it drove through quiet country towns in Maryland and Pennsylvania; and when it was known who was within the coach, great interest was excited, and villagers stood at their doors and sidewalks eager to have a glimpse of the wife of the Commander-in-Chief on her way to join her husband. It had been whispered that Mrs. Washington was a Tory at heart, and totally disapproved of the stand taken by the General. Such baseless rumors were entirely disproved by this journey to Cambridge, and when the travellers reached Gray's Ferry they were met by a mili-

Digitized by Google

tary escort and conducted into Philadelphia with much form and ceremony. The "Pennsylvania Gazette" of November 22 contained the following: —

"Yesterday the Lady of his Excellency General Washington arrived here, upon her way to New England. She was met at the Lower Ferry by the officers of the different battalions, the troop of light horse,[1] and the light infantry of the 2d battalion, who escorted her into the city."

Mr. Joseph Reed met Mrs. Washington and conducted her to his home, where she was welcomed by his lovely young English wife. She seems to have stayed with the Reeds, and was called upon by a number of ladies, among them Mrs. Thomas Hopkinson, her daughter, Mrs. Duché, and Mrs. John Hancock, who was equally fascinating and more beautiful than that earlier "Dorothy Q" who set the muse of Holmes to rhyming.

[1] This was the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry, organized in 1774, then as now a military company of gentlemen who furnished their own horses and equipment, and held themselves in readiness to serve their country in time of need. The First Troop escorted the General and Mrs. Washington whenever they passed through Philadelphia, and during the first presidency constituted itself their guard of honor. The Troop reported at Cambridge, and upon the hard-won fields of Trenton and Princeton rendered gallant and efficient service, for which it was publicly thanked by the Commander-in-Chief.

Digitized by Google

Philadelphians, ever hospitable and desirous of showing their respect for the wife of the Commander-in-Chief, proposed to give a ball in her honor at the City Tavern. This attention, of questionable kindness in view of the fact that Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Custis had driven over four hundred and fifty miles and must have looked forward with more relish to rest than to festivities, was frowned upon by many patriots, who quoted a resolution of Congress recommending the people to abstain from "vain amusments." Joseph Reed and Colonel Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, were warmly in favor of the entertainment. Christopher Marshall, writing of the affair in his diary, represents himself as taking an active part in the opposition. He says that he informed Samuel Adams that a ball was to be given, and urged him to advise John Hancock to put a stop to it. Be this as it may, Adams and Hancock took decided measures against what would seem to have been an unwise proceeding at this juncture, and appointed a committee to wait upon Mrs. Washington and request her not to attend the ball, at the same time assuring her of their great regard and affection, requesting her, to quote their own words, "to accept of our grateful acknowledgment and respect due to

Digitized by Google

you upon account of your near connection with our worthy and brave general, now exposed on the field of battle, in defense of our rights and liberties."

Lady Washington, as she was now called for the first time, received the waiting gentlemen with great politeness, and by her fine tact and good sense relieved them of all embarrassment. She thanked them for their esteem and concern for her welfare, and assured them "that the desires of the committee were agreeable to her own sentiments."

General Washington wrote to Mr. Reed thanking him warmly for the attention shown his wife in Philadelphia, and asking him to advise the little party as to a proper place to cross the Hudson, "by all means avoiding New York." This warning was in consequence of the unsettled state of affairs in that place, the number of loyalists there, and the strong feeling existing between them and the patriots, especially the Sons of Liberty, who had distinguished themselves by attacking and destroying the establishment of Rivington, "King's printer."

From the "Pennsylvania Gazette," of November 29, it appears that Mrs. Washington and her party, which had been joined by Mrs. Gates, wife of General Gates, and Mrs. Warner

Digitized by Google

Lewis, left Philadelphia on the twenty-seventh, under the escort of the "officers of the First and Second Battalions, the Light Infantry of the First and Third Battalions, and the troop of horse," and proceeded to Newark, where they arrived on the evening of the twenty-ninth. The above military escort probably attended the ladies no farther than Trenton, as we learn from journals of the day that they were met at Elizabethtown by a company of light horse and most of the principal gentlemen of the borough, who accompanied the ladies to Newark, which they entered amid the ringing of bells and general rejoicings. These joyful demonstrations seem to have followed the travellers wherever they went, and must have helped not a little to cheer and beguile the tedium of their long and weary journey, while they gave the Virginia woman, who had never been farther north than Alexandria, a sudden realization of what it was to be the wife of a soldier whose fame had reached far beyond the boundaries of his native Colony. Mingled with enthusiasm for the Commander-in-Chief, there must have been some genuine admiration for these valiant women who had undertaken a drive of many hundreds of miles, to spend the winter with their husbands in a camp upon the outskirts of a city, then in possession of the enemy.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Washington and her party crossed the North River at Dobbs Ferry, and by slow stages reached Cambridge on the eleventh of December. Their arrival was the signal for great rejoicings in camp.

General Washington had established his headquarters in the Craigie house,[1] and here Mrs. Washington made her home during the winter. This fine old mansion, with its wide hall and spacious rooms, offered ample accommodation for Washington and his family. To the right of the front door was his office, with his staff room opening out of it, while beyond there was another room in which they probably dined, as Mr. Daniel Greenleaf told Miss Quincy

[1] The Craigie house was built by Colonel John Vassall in 1759, and confiscated when he joined his Tory associates in Boston. The Provincial Congress furnished the house for the use of General Washington, who occupied it while in Cambridge. It was afterwards the property of Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport, of Thomas Russell of Boston, and of Dr. Andrew Craigie, Apothecary-General to the Revolutionary Army, whose name it bore until it passed into the hands of Mr. Henry W. Longfellow, by whose name it is now generally known. The room to the right of the front door, in which Washington wrote his despatches, was later the favorite study and reading room of the poet. Before this house became the property of Mr. Longfellow, it was owned by Jared Sparks, who edited much of his Washington correspondence here, by Edward Everett, and by Joseph Worcester the lexicographer. — Memorial History of Boston, vol. ii. p. 113.

Digitized by Google

that he and his son dined with General Washington and his aids in a room on the right side of the front door. On the left side of the hall were spacious reception rooms.

Questions of social etiquette, jealousies with regard to dinner invitations to headquarters, and the like, had perplexed Washington, and in one of his letters to Mr. Reed he refers to "unintentional offences, which were rather owing to inattention, or more properly [to] too much attention to other matters." These other matters being of no less importance than the siege of Boston and the organization of an army, it was fortunate for the Commander-in-Chief that his wife came to his aid at this time. Mrs. Washington's kindly hospitality, tact and good breeding, and the sweetness and charm of Mrs. Custis, soon made the Craigie house the centre of much pleasant sociability.

Then, as was the case whenever Mrs. Washington was at headquarters, the house of the commanding officer became a favorite resort for the young officers, for whom she always kept a warm place in her motherly heart. Mr. Irving says that not long after her arrival in camp "Mrs. Washington claimed to keep Twelfth Night in due style, as the anniversary of her wedding. The General was somewhat thoughtful and said that he was afraid he

Digitized by Google

must refuse it." Upon further consideration, probably remembering his wife's prudent avoidance of the ball in Philadelphia, and perhaps realizing then, as he seems to have done later, that a little amusement often served to raise the spirits of both officers and men, Washington's scruples were overcome, and the sixth of January was duly celebrated with cake, candles, and rejoicing.

A few days later John Adams recorded his attendance at a novel dinner party at Colonel Mifflin's, in company with General Washington and his wife and General and Mrs. Gates, "and half a dozen sachems and warriors of the French Caghnawaya tribe with their wives and children." "It was," he says, "a savage feast, carnivorous animals devouring their prey; yet they were wondrous polite. . . . The General introduced me as one of the grand council fire at Philadelphia, upon which they made me many bows and a cordial reception." [1]

Mrs. Mifflin, whom John Adams calls "a pretty Quaker girl," was at Cambridge with her husband. The latter was, says Graydon, "a man of education, ready apprehension and brilliancy, easy of access with the manners of genteel life, though occasionally evolving those of the Quaker." Quartered in the same house

[1] Diary of John Adams.

Digitized by Google

with the Mifflins, were Dr. and Mrs. John Morgan. Mrs. Morgan, in her letters to her mother and sisters, gives the most agreeable pictures of camp life at Cambridge that have come down to us. In the midst of animated descriptions of visits to headquarters, of tea-drinkings, and reviews of the battalions, she pauses to tell her "dear Mamma" of the kindness of the Virginia ladies, begging her to be particularly attentive to Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Custis upon their arrival in Philadelphia, as they had been to her "as a mother and a sister."

Here also was General Knox, with his wife, a charming young woman, the life of every circle that she entered. Although much younger than Mrs. Washington, a warm friendship grew up between these ladies, which continued through the varied scenes of their army experience. Another attachment which Mrs. Washington formed during her sojourn in New England was a lasting friendship for Mrs. Warren, the wife of Dr. James Warren, president of the Provincial Council of Massachusetts. Mrs. Warren was a woman of even greater intellectual gifts than Mrs. Adams, if less witty and vivacious. From her pen we have the following graphic picture of Mrs. Washington and her family: —

Digitized by Google

"If you wish to hear more of this lady's character," wrote Mrs. Warren to Mrs. John Adams, "I will tell you I think the Complacency of her manners speaks at once the benevolence of her heart, and her affability, Candor and gentleness, qualify her to soften the hours of private life, or to sweeten the cares of the Hero, and smooth the rugged paths of War. . . . Mr. Custis is the only Son of the lady above described, — a sensible, modest, agreeable young Man. His lady, a daughter of Colonel Calvert, of Maryland, appears to be of an engaging disposition, but of so extremely delicate a constitution, that it deprives her, as well as her friends, of part of the pleasure, which I am sure would result from her conversation, did she enjoy a more perfect share of health. She is pretty, genteel, easy and agreeable."

Glimpses of the real woman that come to us through such letters as those of Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Warren are worth pages of panegyric, revealing as they do the sincere admiration and respect with which Mrs. Washington inspired those who came within the circle of her influence.

From Mrs. Warren's description, it would appear that Mrs. Adams had not met Mrs. Washington at all, or knew her but slightly, — a supposition which is strengthened by the fact that although in her letters to her husband she dwells upon the attractions of Mrs. Mifflin,

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Morgan, and other ladies whom she met in Cambridge, she has nothing to say about Mrs. Washington. It may be that Mrs. Adams made few visits to Cambridge, in consequence of the absence of her "dearest friend," as she tells him in one of her letters that she has lived "like a nun in a cloister" ever since he went away. Upon one of her visits to camp, before Mrs. Washington's arrival, Mrs. Adams saw the General, and wrote of him with enthusiastic admiration, which causes us to regret the more that this keen and appreciative writer has not somewhere recorded her first impressions of one who was destined, like herself, to occupy so prominent a position in the early history of the nation. Differing as they did in many respects, these two women had certain meeting-grounds of interest, and some characteristics in common. Both were ardently patriotic, and endowed with high courage and great powers of endurance, both were domestic; but Mrs. Adams enjoyed public life, derived pleasure from new scenes and faces, and was keenly appreciative, observing, and intellectual. Mrs. Washington, hospitable and kindly by nature, and able to bring into the varied experiences of her life an habitual philosophy and cheerfulness, probably spoke no truer

Digitized by Google

words of herself than when she said that her days spent away from home, amid the excitement and ceremony of official life, were "lost days" to her. Both of these women were essentially refined and well bred. Mrs. Adams was able to adapt herself to any circle which she entered, at home or abroad, while Mrs. Warren, in speaking of her first meeting with Mrs. Washington, says, "I was received with that politeness and respect shown in a first interview among the well bred and with the ease and cordiality of friendship of a much earlier date." Dr. Thacher, in describing a dinner with the Washingtons, says, "Mrs. Washington combines in an uncommon degree great dignity of manner with the most pleasing affability."

If, in the few of Mrs. Washington's letters that remain, we miss the brilliancy and vivacity that distinguish those of Mrs. Adams, we find an equally keen and intelligent interest in the events of the time. In writing from Cambridge, January 31, 1776, she says:[1] —

My dear Sister, — I have wrote to you several times in hopes that would put you in mind of me,

[1] The original of this letter is in possession of the Washington Association of New Jersey, in the old headquarters at Morristown. The value of the paper is enhanced by the fact that the address to Mrs. Bassett of Eltham is in General Washington's familiar handwriting.

Digitized by Google

but I find it has not had its intended affect and I am really very uneasy at not hearing from you and have made all the excuses for you that I can think of, but it will not doe much longer, if I doe not get a letter by this night's post, I shall think myself quite forgot by all my Friends. The distance is long yet the post comes regularly every week.

The General, myself, and Jack are very well Nelly Custis is I hope getting well again. . . . hope noe accident will happen to her in going back, — I have not thought much about it yet god knows where we shall be I suppose there will be a change soon, but how, I cannot pretend to say. A few days a goe Gen. Clinton, with several companyes sailed out of Boston Harbor, to what place distant for, we cannot find out. Some think it is to Virginia he is gon others to New York — they have been kept in Boston so long that I suppose they will be glad to seek for a place where they may have more room, as they cannot get out any way hear but by water — our navey has been very successful in taking thair vessels two was taken last week loded with coles and potatoes, wines & several other articles for the use of the troops — If Gen. Clinton is gon to New York, — Gen Lee is there before him, and I hope will give him a very warm reception — was sent thare some time a goe to have matters put in proper order in case any disturbance should happen, as thare are many Tories in that part of the world, or at least many

Digitized by Google

are susspected there to be very unfreindly to our cause at this time —

winter here been remarkably mild. The Rivers has never been frozen hard enough to walk upon the Ice since I came heer, My dear sister, be so good as to remember me to all enquireing friends — give my Duty to my mama, and love to my brothers and sisters Mr. Bassett, your Dear Children and self — in which the General, Jack and Nelly, join me.

I am, my dear Nancy
Your ever effectionate sister,
MARTHA WASHINGTON.

About six weeks later, while the British were making merry in Boston, Washington in a single night fortified Dorchester Heights, which commanded the harbor, and by sending a heavy force of troops across the Charles River to attack the city, so checkmated Howe that there was nothing left for him to do but to evacuate the town. On the twentieth of March, having driven the enemy to their boats, General Washington and his army entered Boston. After garrisoning the town and leaving General Putnam in command, Washington set out for New York.

Mrs. Washington remained in Cambridge for several weeks. The day before her departure Mrs. Warren dined with her, after which

Digitized by Google

the two friends parted, not to meet again until the New England poetess visited the presidential mansion in New York in 1790. Mrs. Washington and her son and daughter left Cambridge on the twentieth of April, and drove to New York by way of Hartford and New Haven. In New York she took up her abode at the General's headquarters on Pearl Street, opposite Cedar, while Mr. and Mrs. Custis returned to Virginia. The young husband, who had just attained his majority, came into possession of his estate, and settled down with his wife at Abingdon, where, in August, their first child, Elizabeth Parke, was born.

In May, we find Mrs. Washington in Philadelphia, undergoing inoculation at the hands of Dr. John Morgan. John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress then in session at Philadelphia, had written to General Washington before he left New York, giving him and his wife a most cordial invitation to stay at his home during their visit to Philadelphia, adding that his residence at the corner of Fourth and Arch Streets was large and roomy, and that Mrs. Hancock would consider it an honor to have Mrs. Washington take the small-pox in her house. It is probable that the Virginia lady felt that she could indulge in this luxury with greater freedom in

Digitized by Google

a boarding-house or inn, as it appears from Washington's correspondence that John Hancock's invitation was not accepted, and that the hospitality of Mistress Dorothy was not put to the severe test mentioned in her husband's letter.

Mrs. Washington had "the smallpox so favorably," to use the phrasing of a letter of the General's to his brother, John Augustine, that early in June he was able to leave her out of danger and ready to start for Mount Vernon. The journey home was, however, delayed for over two months in consequence of the alarm occasioned by Lord Dunmore's final and unsuccessful invasion of the Virginia coast.

It was during Mrs. Washington's stay in Philadelphia that the infamous Hickey, or Tryon, plot against the General's life was exposed. Mingled with her thankfulness over this deliverance there must have been many anxious forebodings in the wife's mind, who realized now, as never before, to what daily and hourly perils her husband's acknowledged ability and high position exposed him.

Mrs. Washington was in Philadelphia as late as the twentieth of August, as she wrote to her sister on that date: —

"I am still in this town and noe prospect at present of leaving it. The General is at New

Digitized by Google

York, he is well, and wrote to me yesterday, and informed me that Lord Dunmore, with part of his fleet was come to General Howe, at Staten Island; that another division of Hessians is expected before they think the regulars will begin their attack on us. Some hear begin to think there will be no battle after all. Last week our boats made another attempt on the ships up the North river, and had grappled a fire-ship with the Phoenix ten minutes, but she got cleare of her and is come down the river. On Saturday last our people burnt one of the tenders. I thank God we shant want men. The Army at New York is very large, and numbers of men are still going. There is at this time in the city four thousand, on their march to the camp, and the Virginians daily expected.

"I doe, my dear sister, most religiously wish there was an end to the war, that we might have the pleasure of meeting again."

Soon after writing this letter Mrs. Washington returned to Mount Vernon, where she spent the anxious months that followed, in which occurred the battles of Long Island, of Harlem Heights and of White Plains, the capture of Fort Washington by the British, and the flight of the Continental troops across New Jersey, — disasters which were soon followed by the victories of Trenton and Princeton.

Although the residence of Mr. and Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Custis was at Abingdon, near Mount Vernon, they always, at General Washington's express desire, joined their mother and made their home with her when she was not in camp with her husband.

Digitized by Google

VII

CAMP LIFE

One of the most interesting chapters in a married life that to some persons may seem to be devoid of romantic incidents, is to be found in the years between 1776 and 1783, when Mrs. Washington, at her own home, watched and waited for tidings from the seat of war, or entered with her husband into the hardships and excitements of camp life. The General always had his wife with him at his winter quarters, when he could make her comfortable, and she afterwards took pride in telling her grandchildren that it had been her fortune to hear the first cannon at the opening and the last at the closing of most of the campaigns of the long war.

Mr. Lossing says that at Morristown, in the beginning of the winter of '77, "the accommodations were so limited and the movements of his troops were so uncertain, that he [the General] thought it not prudent for Mrs. Washington to come to camp." As there was

Digitized by Google

constant danger from marauding parties of the enemy, and as the army was much reduced by the expiration of enlistments and the large proportion of the men under inoculation, Washington may have discouraged his wife from joining him in the early part of the winter. Later on he was anxious, worried, and finally so ill that grave fears were entertained for his recovery. Bad news travelled fast, even in those days of slow posts, and Mrs. Washington was not a woman whom any thought of danger could keep away from her husband when he needed her. Upon another occasion, when she was in Philadelphia, and the General was ill in Virginia, she wrote that if she did not soon hear of his recovery she would set forth to join him, and if no conveyance was provided for the journey she would go on foot rather than endure the anxiety that she felt when separated from him.

Washington had his Morristown headquarters in the winter and spring of '77 in the Arnold Tavern, on the west side of the "Green," a house kept by Colonel Jacob Arnold, an officer of the Light Horse Guards. Many discouragements marked the early months of this winter. Soon after the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief, he lost a brave and valued officer, Colonel

Digitized by Google

Jacob Ford, who died of lung fever, and on the day of his burial an alarm of small-pox made it necessary to convert the two churches of the town — the Presbyterian and Baptist — into hospitals for the men who were inoculated for small-pox. It was during this time that Washington joined Pastor Johnes and his people at their semi-annual communion, after receiving the good pastor's assurance, "Ours is not the Presbyterian table, but the Lord's table, and we give the Lord's invitation to all his followers, of whatever name." This solemn service was held in the rear of the parsonage on Morris Street. The congregation, wrapped in their heaviest clothing, with no roof above them but the winter sky, gathered about their pastor, having cheerfully relinquished their church to the suffering soldiers.

Mrs. Washington reached Morristown on the fifteenth of March, as recorded in the "Continental Journal": "His Excellency has been ill for some days, but is now perfectly recovered, and has the satisfaction of his amiable lady's company, who arrived here this day in good health." A few days later, Timothy Pickering recorded in his diary that he drank tea at headquarters with the General and his lady.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Ellet says that upon this, her first visit to New Jersey, Mrs. Washington was met by her husband some distance from camp, probably at Pluckamin. The lady at whose home the General awaited the arrival of his wife was much astonished, when the carriage stopped, at seeing so plainly dressed a woman descend from it. She, with some idea in her mind that "fine feathers make fine birds," concluded that this person was an attendant of the great lady, until she saw Washington hasten to meet her, and noticed the tenderness of his greeting. After satisfying himself as to his wife's health and her comfort during the journey, his next inquiries were about his favorite horses at Mount Vernon.

Mrs. Theodorick Bland of Virginia was in Morristown, which she calls "a clever little village, whose three spires would make it seem pretentious," when Mrs. Washington arrived in camp. In one of her home letters she says: "His [the General's] worthy lady seems in perfect felicity by the side of her 'old man,' as she calls him." Mrs. Bland speaks of visits to headquarters two or three times a week, "according to the ceremonial," adding that she would go more frequently from choice. A delightful social circle was gathered in and around Morristown this win-

Digitized by Google

ter, and under its influence, despite the discouragements and hardships of the campaign, the face of war sometimes took upon itself a cheerful aspect. Many New York and New Jersey families had in these troubled times taken refuge among the Somerset Hills; others, like the Southards, Fords, Johneses, Lotts, and Thebauds, belonged to this region. Mr. John Morton, to whom the British had given the sobriquet of the "rebel banker," in consequence of the large sums of money loaned by him to Congress, had recently bought a farm near Basking Ridge. To this pleasant home Mrs. Morton and her charming daughters welcomed the young people of the neighborhood, and here the General and his wife were frequent guests. Elias Boudinot had also established his family at Basking Ridge, while his sister, Mrs. Hatfield, lived not far from him. At the Boudinots' home, which was only eight miles from Morristown, Mrs. Washington often visited. Susan Boudinot, the "ewe lamb" whom Mr. Boudinot afterwards bestowed upon Mr. William Bradford, of Philadelphia, delighted in her old age to recall "Lady Washington" as she had appeared to her girlish eyes, especially upon one occasion that stood out distinctly in her memory. Some practice firing among

Digitized by Google

the soldiers frightened her, and she was flying down the stairs, calling out, "The British are coming!" only to be caught in the motherly arms of Mrs. Washington, who had just then entered the front door, and to be assured by her that those who fired were friends, not foes. A stanch little patriot was Susan Boudinot. Once, when a cup of tea was handed to her at Governor Franklin's, she accepted it with proper civility, touched the cup to her lips, but not deigning to drink the contraband beverage, crossed the room, and dashed the contents out of the window.

General Greene had his quarters in Lord Stirling's fine old house, which was within visiting distance of Morristown, and here, in addition to the two agreeable hostesses, Lady Stirling and her daughter, Lady Kitty, were the Misses Livingston. These young ladies, daughters of good Governor Livingston, who had succeeded William Franklin, the Tory Governor of New Jersey, had placed his daughters with their aunt, Lady Stirling, for the winter. General Greene, in writing to his wife of the attractions of the Stirling household, says of the Livingston sisters: "They are three young ladies of distinguished merit, sensible, polite and easy. Their man-

Digitized by Google

ners are soft and engaging; they wish to see you here, and I wish it too."

Sarah, the beauty of this charming family, was already the wife of John Jay. Susan, who was considered a wit in Revolutionary circles, added not a little to the gayety and pleasure of her aunt's household at Basking Ridge, and upon one occasion, by her cleverness, preserved some valuable papers of her father's from a marauding party which invaded his Trenton home, Liberty Hall. Catharine Livingston, the "dear Kitty" of Mrs. Jay's letters, was the youngest of this trio of sisters, who are spoken of by Mrs. Bland as having joined the General and Mrs. Washington in "horseback parties." These parties, which were among the pleasures of the winter, included lively Mrs. Bland herself, Colonel Hamilton, the General's private secretary, and Colonels Meade, Tilden, Harrison, and Gibbs, the latter being then in command of the Life Guard.

Where so many young people were thrown together there was naturally much gayety and enjoyment, which were encouraged by the General and Mrs. Washington, although anything like extravagance in dress or living was frowned upon by them, as unbecoming patriots engaged in a long war that would try to the

Digitized by Google

utmost the resources of the country. Dr. Joseph Tuttle[1] gives an amusing account of the experiences of some Morristown ladies who called upon Mrs. Washington, and with a natural desire to appear at their best and to do honor to the great lady, donned their bravest attire. Mrs. Troupe, one of the party, thus related her experiences to Mrs. Tuttle: —

"Well, what do you think, Mrs. Tuttle, I have been to see Lady Washington!"

"Have you indeed? Then tell me all about her ladyship, how she appeared and what she said."

"Well, I will honestly tell you," answered Mrs. Troupe, "I never was so ashamed in all my life. You see, Madame —— ——, and Madame —— ——, and Madame Budd, and myself thought we would visit Lady Washington, and as she was said to be so grand a lady, we thought we must put on our best bibbs and bands. So we dressed ourselves in our most elegant ruffles and silks, and were introduced to her ladyship. And don't you think we found her *knitting and with a specked* (*check*) *apron on!* She received us very graciously, and easily, but after the compliments were over, she resumed her knitting. There we were without a stitch of work, and sitting in State, but General Washington's lady with her own hands was knitting stockings for herself and husband!

[1] Revolutionary Fragments, by Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, D. D.

Digitized by Google

"And that was not all. In the afternoon her ladyship took occasion to say, in a way that we could not be offended at, that at this time it was very important that American ladies should be patterns of industry to their countrywomen, because the separation from the mother country will dry up the sources whence many of our comforts have been derived. We must become independent by our determination to do without what we cannot make ourselves. Whilst our husbands and brothers are examples of patriotism, we must be patterns of industry!"

Another Morristown woman, in giving an account of the same visit, says:—

"Yesterday, with several others, I visited Lady Washington at head-quarters. We expected to find the wealthy wife of the great general elegantly dressed, for the time of our visit had been fixed; but, instead, she was neatly attired in a plain brown habit. Her gracious and cheerful manners delighted us all, but we felt rebuked by the plainness of her apparel and her example of persistent industry, while we were extravagantly dressed idlers, a name not very creditable in these perilous times. She seems very wise in experience, kind-hearted and winning in all her ways. She talked much of the sufferings of the poor soldiers, especially of the sick ones. Her heart seemed to be full of compassion for them."

Digitized by Google

Whether or not this discourse and good example led to the formation of sewing societies for the relief of the soldiers is not recorded. Such organizations certainly existed in and around Morristown, as Mrs. Colles[1] speaks of several sewing and knitting societies presided over by Mrs. Ralph Smith, Mrs. Counsellor Condict, Mrs. Parson Johnes, and Mrs. Anna Kitchell of Whippany, while of this latter good woman it is related that she always kept her meal-bag open and her *pot au feu* boiling to satisfy the appetites of hungry soldiers. From the recollections of Dr. Tuttle and others, which recall the patriotic devotion of Jersey women during the Revolution, it would appear that Mrs. Washington's remarks and example were not intended to point a moral and adorn a tale; but rather that she was carrying out the habits of thrift and industry that were, with her, cardinal virtues, not to be set aside even when she was entertaining company. Mrs. Cox, the wife of Colonel John Cox of Bloomsbury, often drew for her children and grandchildren pleasant pictures of the visits of this sociable Virginia lady, who, as soon as breakfast was over, would bring out her fathomless mending basket, from which she was content to mend and

[1] Historic Morristown, by Julia Keese Colles.

Digitized by Google

darn "from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve." Colonel Cox, who was assistant quartermaster to General Greene, and at his forge at Batisto made many of the cannon used in the war, was a warm personal friend of Washington's, while between the ladies of the family there existed a cordial acquaintance.

Mrs. Washington spent the summer of '77 at Mount Vernon, where, in the absence of her husband, she was cheered by the companionship of her children and her little granddaughter, Elizabeth. In December of this year a second grandchild was born, to whom was given the name of the much loved grandmother.

A fanciful story is told of Mrs. Washington having joined her husband the following autumn at his headquarters in the Emlen house, near Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania, whence she rode to Valley Forge upon a pillion behind him. This is a picturesque enough legend, whose interest has been enhanced by a sketch of the worthy pair floundering through the snowdrifts upon an unhappy nag; but it is entirely without foundation, as Mrs. Washington was undoubtedly in Virginia when the army went into winter quarters at Valley Forge. In a letter written to John Custis, on the first of February, Washington says: "Your

Digitized by Google

mamma is not yet arrived, but if she left Mount Vernon on the 26th ultimo, as intended, may, I think, be expected every hour." Mrs. Washington did not reach Valley Forge until the tenth of February. Soon after her arrival she wrote to Mrs. Warren: —

"The general is in camp, in what is called the great valley on the Banks of the Schuylkill. Officers and men are chiefly in Hutts, which they say is tolerable comfortable; the army are as healthy as can well be expected in general.

The General's apartment is very small; he has had a log Cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first."

This description does not convey the idea of much comfort at headquarters, nor does the old stone house of Isaac Potts as it stands to-day. The log cabin has long since disappeared; but in one of the two rooms on the ground floor, used by Washington, is still to be seen in the sill of the east window the box, which appears as a part of the casement, which Mrs. Washington speaks of as the receptacle of her husband's valuable papers. In her letters, however, she dwells little upon the inconveniences of her surroundings. Like a true soldier's wife, her thoughts turn to the troops and their comfort.

Digitized by Google

Never was the moral force of Washington, his absolute oneness with his army, so plainly demonstrated as during this wretched winter, when, as if to accentuate the misery of the American troops, they knew that Philadelphia had taken Howe and his men, to use witty Dr. Franklin's *bon mot*, and that they were living in plenty in the chief city of the nation. Congress, which like a portion of the army had been disintegrated by a self-seeking and time-serving spirit, made tardy response to the passionate, eloquent appeals of the Commander-in-Chief, who was often at his wits' end, with an army loyal to the core but unfit for service for want of proper food and clothing. "Exalted virtue and patriotism, and the strong attachment of the officers to General Washington, only," says Elkanah Watson, "held the army together," to which we may add another factor, — the devotion of the common soldiers, who, half-clothed and starving as they were, elicited the admiration of the Commander-in-Chief for their "incomparable patience and fidelity."

Lady Stirling, Mrs. Clement Biddle, Mrs. Knox, and other officers' wives, were in camp with their husbands during this winter. The presence of these ladies among them, their cheerful endurance of hardships, and their

Digitized by Google

efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the soldiers, served to encourage both officers and men. It was during her army experience, says Mr. Irving, that Mrs. Washington acquired an inveterate habit of knitting, not as the amusement of an idle hour, but because of the great necessity for stockings among the soldiers. When General Washington wrote to the dilatory Congress that his men were destitute of proper clothing, and that they might be traced by the marks left upon the snow by their frosted and bleeding feet, we may believe that Mrs. Washington and her companions felt that their knitting-needles could not fly fast enough, and also that their own stores of goods and provisions were taxed to the utmost limit. Mrs. Westlake, who lived near the Potts' house at Valley Forge, and who, in her old age, conversed with Mr. Lossing, said:[1]—

"I never in my life knew a woman so busy from early morning until late at night as was Lady Washington, providing comforts for the sick soldiers. Every day, excepting Sunday, the wives of officers in camp, and sometimes other women, were invited to Mr. Pott's to assist her in knitting socks, patching garments, and making shirts for the poor soldiers, when materials could be procured. Every

[1] Life of Mary and Martha Washington, by Benson J. Lossing.

Digitized by Google

fair day she might be seen, with basket in hand, and with a single attendant, going among the huts seeking the keenest and most needy sufferer, and giving all the comforts to them in her power. I sometimes went with her, for I was a stout girl, sixteen years old. On one occasion she went to the hut of a dying sergeant, whose young wife was with him. His case seemed to particularly touch the heart of the good lady, and after she had given him some wholesome food she had prepared with her own hands, she knelt down by his straw pallet and prayed earnestly for him and his wife with her sweet and solemn voice. I shall never forget the scene."

Surely these days in camp, although spent away from her home that she loved, could never have been counted by Mrs. Washington among her "lost days," so full were they of the care and thought for others in which her kind heart rejoiced, and which often caused the soldiers to say when her motherly face appeared among them, "God bless Lady Washington."

In February the Baron von Steuben arrived at the encampment with Mr. Du Ponceau, his secretary. The young Frenchman speaks with enthusiasm of Washington's appearance and bearing at Valley Forge, as indescribably impressive and in expression beyond any pic-

Digitized by Google

ture of him that was ever executed. Dignity, patriotic devotion, and fatherly care of his troops, as well as the power to command them, were all written upon this noble face. Mr. Du Ponceau says that he and the Baron dined frequently with the General, and spent the evening at headquarters when Mrs. Washington was there. Late in the winter this couple was cheered by the visit to camp of a Mount Vernon neighbor, the Rev. Bryan Fairfax, who, although disapproving of armed resistance to the Crown, allowed no difference of opinion to interfere with his warm friendship for the Washingtons. We can imagine the joy that it was to Washington to see this friendly face once more, and how eagerly Mrs. Washington, hungry for home news, plied him with questions about John and Nelly and the babies.

Toward spring supplies began to arrive with some regularity, and provisions intended for British tables in Philadelphia were frequently intercepted and diverted into the camp of the hungry patriots. General Lee, who had been recently exchanged for the British General Prescott, taken prisoner at Newport the year before, was received at Valley Forge with great rejoicings. General Washington rode several miles to meet this officer, who a few

Digitized by Google

months later proved so false to him, dismounted, and received him like a brother.

"He passed thro' the Lines of Officers and the Army," says Mr. Boudinot, "who all paid him the highest military Honors to Headquarters, where Mrs. Washington was, and here he was entertained with an elegant Dinner, and the music playing the whole Time. A Room was assigned him back of Mrs. Washington's sitting-room and all his baggage was stowed in it."

A few days later Washington wrote to Thomas Wharton, Governor of Pennsylvania: "Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Pleasants and two other ladies connected with the Quakers confined at Winchester waited upon me this day for permission to pass to York Town to endeavor to obtain the release of their friends." One of "the two other ladies" was Mrs. Henry Drinker, who has left in her journal[1] a pleasant description of this visit to Valley Forge:—

"We requested an audience with the General, and sat with his wife (a sociable pretty kind of woman), until he came in. A number of officers were there who were very complaisant, Tench Tilghman among ye rest. It was not long before G. Washington came, and discoursed, with us freely, but not as long as we could have wished, as dinner

[1] Journal of Elizabeth Drinker, p. 93.

Digitized by Google

was served, to which he invited us. There were 15 Officers, besides ye G[l] and his wife, Gen. Greene, and Gen. Lee. We had an elegant dinner, which was soon over, when we went out with ye Gen[ls] wife up to her Chamber — and saw no more of him."

Rumors of the much-desired alliance with France had sent rays of light athwart the gloom of this dismal winter; but the official announcement of the ratification of the treaty did not reach camp until May breezes had begun to blow through the lovely groves in which the army was encamped. A day of general rejoicing and thanksgiving followed the receipt of this intelligence. Appropriate religious services were held at the quarters of General Maxwell, which were attended by the officers, their wives, and suites, after which there was a grand review of the army by the Commander-in-Chief. It is said that when the General retired from the morning service with his wife, mingled with cheers and huzzas for the King of France, for the thirteen States, and for General Washington, there were also shouts of "Long live Lady Washington." If ever women had earned the right to share in the triumphs of their husbands it was such wives as those who at Valley Forge had borne with them the trials of this wretched winter.

Digitized by Google

In November, 1778, Mrs. Washington wrote[1] from Mount Vernon to Mr. Bartholomew Dandridge: —

DEAR BROTHER, — I received your kind favôr by Mr. Posey and should have wrote to you long before this but have every day expected Jack would be ready to set out.

I Am very sorry to hear that my mamma has been so unwell and thank god that she has recovered again. I wish I was near enough to come to see you and her.

I am very uneasy at this time — I have some reason to expect that I shall take another trip to the northward — the pore Geneeral is not likely to come to see us from what I can see hear — I expect to hear seertainly by the next post — if I doe I shall write to you to inform you and my Friends — if I am so happy to stay at home — I shall hope to see you with my sisters hear as soon as you are at leasure.

Please to give little Patty a kiss for me I have sent her a pair of shoes — there was not a doll to be got in the City of philadelphia or I would have sent her one (the shoes are in a bundle for my mamma) I am very glad to hear that you and your family are well — I cannot tell you more news than I can I have had no letter since he came from the camp — by some neglect of the post master my

[1] From the original now in the collection of the Mount Vernon Association.

Digitized by Google

letters does not come regularly to hand. I am with my Duty to my mamma my Love to my sister Aylett — my sister and family and my dear Brother Your Eaver affectionate

M WASHINGTON

Although the General had been as near home as Fredericksburg, Virginia, during the autumn, he does not seem to have had time for one day's rest and refreshment at Mount Vernon. In January he and Mrs. Washington were again in Philadelphia, visiting at the house of the Hon. Henry Laurens, and, according to the letters of Mrs. Richard Bache, entering into social pleasures at the hospitable homes of the Powels, Gérards, Morrises, and others. A few weeks later, the French alliance was celebrated at the New Jersey encampment in proper style. General Knox and his officers gave a grand entertainment near Pluckamin, which was attended by the General and his lady, the principal officers of the army with their wives, and a number of residents of the State. Upon this occasion his Excellency opened the ball with Mrs. Knox, who, although General Greene wrote that she was "fatter than ever," could still tread a measure with grace and dignity. Mrs. Knox had two young ladies from Boston staying with her this winter, and Mrs. Washington had a couple of

Digitized by Google

Virginia girls with her, who arrived in camp in time to enjoy this ball, of which General Knox wrote to his brother:—

"We had at the Park [artillery park] on the 18th a most genteel entertainment given by self and officers. Every body allows it to be the first of the kind ever exhibited in this State at least. We had above seventy ladies, all of the first *ton* in the State, and between three and four hundred gentlemen. We danced all night — an elegant room, the illuminating, fire works, &c., were more than pretty."

It is pleasant to think of New Jersey, which was so often a battlefield during the eight years' war, as the scene of such festivities as this ball or such "pretty little frisks" as those described by Greene at Middlebrook, when his Excellency and Mrs. Greene danced upwards of three hours without once sitting down.

We find no mention of Mrs. Washington having joined in these "pretty frisks," but from her own letters and contemporaneous journals and notes it appears that she entered freely into the social pleasures of camp life as into its cares and anxieties. She was present in company with Mrs. Greene and Mrs. Knox at a review, in May, given in honor of the French Minister, M. Gérard, and Don Juan de Mirailles, when the General's favorite

Digitized by Google

young officer, Major Lee, led the cavalcade with his troop of Virginia Light Horse in their fine green and white uniforms. A number of ladies were present at this review, as they were at a unique one held later in the month, when the Commander-in-Chief reviewed his troops in the presence of a group of Indian chiefs from western Pennsylvania; whose appearance, says Dr. Thacher, was beyond description ludicrous, adorned as they were with eagles' plumes, bears' claws, and other fanciful decorations, while some wore over their shoulders ragged shawls that fluttered in the breeze. In writing to Mrs. Custis of this review Mrs. Washington says that she and Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Greene were able to witness this most amusing scene from a carriage, adding, "Some of the Indians were fine-looking, but most of them appeared worse than Falstaff's gang. And such horses and trappings! The General says it was done to keep the Indians friendly toward us. They appeared like cutthroats, all."

In December, 1779, the Washingtons were again in Morristown. An excellent observation post, as well as a safe and sheltered winter home for the army, was this fine plateau with its surrounding hills, from one of whose heights the General could, by means of sig-

Digitized by Google

nals, be apprised of the movements of the enemy in and around New York City. An alarm gun, gigantic for those days, was stationed upon one of the peaks of the Short Hills, ready to give the signal in case of a sudden movement of the British toward Philadelphia or West Point, the interesting question of the hour being which of those places was to be the objective point of the foe. Upon a hillside near the Mendham Road the artillery was encamped, their commander, Knox, having his quarters in a farmhouse near by, where, surrounded by troops, artillery carriages, and all the circumstance if not the pomp, of war, Mrs. Knox and her little children spent this winter. Along the sides of the hills, for many miles, were the huts of the soldiers, built with such precision, according to Washington's directions, that an observing traveller said that "they were in more exact order than the streets of Philadelphia."

That road, whose sporting title, Jockey Hollow, must have pleased Washington as it does lovers of horse flesh to-day, led, and still leads, to a broad level space, which was used as a grand parade ground for the whole army.[1]

[1] Upon the Jocky Hollow road and originally its terminus, is the Wick farm, made famous by the exploit of Temperance Wick. This young woman owned a fine riding horse which was greatly admired by some of the American soldiers en-

Digitized by Google

Up hilly Spring Street, at whose top stands a frame house, in which courts-martial were held, and along the pleasant Jockey Hollow road Washington often passed, and, according to Dr. Tuttle, Mrs. Washington was frequently by his side, mounted on a fine bay horse. Their faithful mulatto "Bill" followed them, and they were always escorted by a number of the Life Guard, often by its Captain, William Colfax, and such other favorite officers as Benjamin Grymes, Alexander Hamilton, or Tench Tilghman, and such bright beauties as the Livingston sisters and Miss Elizabeth Schuyler. Colonel Tilghman thought this latter young lady possessed "the most good-natured, lively dark eyes" that he had ever seen; but the beautiful eyes were not destined to cast their soft rays upon him, as Hamilton,

camped in the neighborhood of her father's house. One day, while riding near her home, she was pursued and surrounded by several soldiers who claimed her horse for the use of the army. Miss Wick, who was a fearless rider, made a bold dash and so outdistanced her pursuers that she reached her home in time to lead her horse through the kitchen and parlor to a bedroom in the rear of the house which had but one window guarded by a wooden shutter. Although the disappointed soldiers repeatedly searched the premises for the coveted horse they were unable to find him, no indiscreet neigh or whinny revealing his presence in "my lady's chamber," where he remained undisturbed until the troops had left the neighborhood. — See The Story of an Old Farm, by Andrew D. Mellick.

Digitized by Google

fascinating, if somewhat inconstant, was at this time paying devoted attention to Miss Schuyler, and Tench Tilghman had already found favor in the sight of a certain fair cousin of his own, whom he afterwards married.

The home of the Commander-in-Chief was not in the Arnold Tavern this winter, but in a more spacious mansion on the old Columbia turnpike, which had belonged to Colonel Jacob Ford, and was then occupied by his widow, Mrs. Theodosia Ford.[1] In this large house it would seem as if the Washingtons, whose quarters were often restricted, might have gratified their hospitable desires to the fullest extent, and as if in this kitchen, with its ample fireplace, dinners might have been cooked worthy of the notable Virginia housewife who presided over the table in the adjoining room; yet from the General's letters it appears that his quarters were crowded even

[1] This house, as it stands to-day, seemingly untouched by the hand of time, surrounded by sloping lawns and gardens, from its windows commanding a fine view of near and distant hills, is like a bit of last-century history set down in the modern life of Morristown. So it is destined to remain in the years to come; for the old mansion, with all the memories that render it dear and sacred, has been gathered under the protecting wings of the Washington Association of New Jersey, whose laudable design is to so preserve it through future generations.

Digitized by Google

here. Mrs. Ford and her attendants lived in the house, Washington's military family had to be accommodated, and he and Mrs. Washington had eighteen servants for whom there was no lodging-place until two log-buildings were added for kitchen and offices. In the meadow opposite the house the Life Guard was hutted, and upon an alarm would at once take possession of headquarters and barricade the entrances, five men being placed at each open window, where, with guns loaded and cocked, they would remain until troops from camp surrounded the house. Mrs. Washington used often to tell, in later years, of these sudden night alarms, when, with all the covering that they could get, she and Mrs. Ford would shiver under the bedclothes while the winter wind swept through the open windows of their sleeping-rooms. Mrs. Washington's room was on the right hand of the front door, over the dining-room, the General's bedroom and that of his aides being on the opposite side of the hall. Under the arch of this most beautiful Colonial doorway passed such American generals as Knox, genial and fun-loving as he was brave and true; gallant Maxwell, who had served under Wolfe at Quebec; Wayne, who, if he was "Mad Anthony" on the battlefield, was "Dandy Wayne" in

Digitized by Google

my lady's parlor; the splendid fighting Quaker, Greene; "Molly Stark's husband," whose command lay over among the hills; Gist and Smallwood, and such distinguished foreigners as Von Steuben, Kosciusko, and Lafayette, — who was like a younger brother to the General and his wife, — the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and Don Juan de Mirailles. Here, also, came governors of States, members of Congress, and many Jersey patriots to call upon the Commander-in-Chief, bringing their wives and daughters with them to pay their respects to Lady Washington. Pretty Mrs. Greene tripped up those steps many times with her dear friend, Cornelia Lott, and Lady Stirling and her daughter, now Lady Kitty Duer, Mrs. Knox, and Mrs. John Cochran.

While his wife was with him, the General strove to cultivate a social spirit in camp, having some of the young officers, or one or other of the married officers, with their wives, to dine with him nearly every day. On these occasions he and Mrs. Washington sat side by side, while Colonel Hamilton, or one of the other aides, carved and did the honors of the table. Headquarters was more attractive than ever to Hamilton this season, because the Campfield house, where Miss Betsy Schuyler was spending the winter with her aunt, Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Cochran, was within a five miuntes' walk, beside which, the young lady was a great favorite of Mrs. Washington's, and her frequent guest. So, also, was handsome Captain Colfax, whose command lay in the meadow in front of the house, for whom Mrs. Washington entertained so warm a friendship that she netted for him a queue net with her own hands. His lady-love, Hester Schuyler, a cousin of Miss Betsy's, lived some miles away at Pompton, in Bergen County.

In April M. de la Luzerne and Don Juan de Mirailles were entertained at headquarters, a grand review and ball being given in their honor. In the midst of these festivities the young Spaniard, De Mirailles, was attacked with a sudden and violent illness. Mrs. Washington ministered to him with her own hands, but despite care and tender nursing he grew rapidly worse, and expired at headquarters on the twenty-eighth.

The next November, while on her way to join her husband at New Winsor, Mrs. Washington was able to aid and encourage Mrs. Bache and other patriotic Philadelphia women, who had formed an association for the relief of the soldiers. To the fund raised for this purpose, which amounted to over seven thousand dollars, the Marquis de Lafayette

Digitized by Google

contributed generously in the name of his young wife, the Countess de la Luzerne also contributed handsomely, as did Mrs. Washington, in money, as well as in time and thought. This association, which had been organized with Mrs. Joseph Reed as its president, was, after her death, presided over by Mrs. Bache, who wrote to Washington in December, expressing the hope that the twenty-five hundred shirts which she was sending him would be worn "with as much pleasure as they were made." The amiable De Chastellux, who greatly admired the patriotic devotion of these Philadelphia women, said of Mrs. Washington, whom he met at Governor Reed's, "She is about forty, or five and forty, rather plump, but fresh, and with an agreeable face."

In September, 1781, Washington crossed his own threshold for the first time since he had accepted the command of the army in the spring of '75. Mrs. Washington's joy in having her husband at Mount Vernon once more was of brief duration, as he was obliged to set out for Williamsburg in three days, to complete the business that had brought him to the South, which was nothing less than the brilliant military movements that culminated in the surrender of Yorktown. At Mount Vernon, the General was joined by the Count de

Digitized by Google

Rochambeau and the Marquis de Chastellux, with whom he journeyed to Williamsburg to meet Lafayette and De Grasse. It was when Washington went on board the Ville de Paris, at Hampton, that the amusing incident related by Mr. Custis occurred: The count, with true French effusiveness, threw his arms about the Commander-in-Chief, and giving him the foreign salute on either cheek, exclaimed, "My dear little General," to the great amusement of the officers present, who controlled their mirth as best they could, while Knox, whose sense of humor dominated his notions of propriety, laughed until his fat sides shook.

Close upon the heels of the messenger who brought to Mount Vernon the joyful news of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis with his army, there followed another who carried sorrow in his train. John Custis, who had for some time acted as aide to his stepfather, was ill, dying, at Eltham. This gallant young officer was attacked by camp fever in the trenches before Yorktown, and realizing, says his son, that his illness would be mortal, he had but one wish to be gratified, which was to behold the surrender of the sword of Cornwallis. He was supported to the ground, witnessed the final triumph, and was then con-

Digitized by Google

veyed to Eltham, a distance of thirty miles from camp. Mrs. Custis and Mrs. Washington reached the bedside of the loved husband and son only in time to soothe the last hours of the sufferer. From the field of victory the Commander-in-Chief was summoned by an express from Dr. Craik, announcing that there was no hope. Attended by a single officer and a groom, he left headquarters at midnight, and, to use his own words: —

"I arrived at Eltham, the seat of Colonel Bassett, in time to see poor Custis breathe his last. This unexpected and affecting event threw Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Custis, who were both present, into such deep distress that the circumstance of it, and a duty I owed to the deceased in assisting at his funeral, prevented my reaching this place [Mount Vernon] till the 13th."

John Parke Custis died on the fifth of November, and was buried at Eltham. Of the four children whom he left, three daughters and a son, the two younger were adopted by the General, and ever after were like own children to him as well as to Mrs. Washington. Eleanor was between two and three years of age at the time of her father's death, and her brother, the General's namesake, was a baby, six months old.

Digitized by Google

Although Lord Cornwallis himself said that the victory at Yorktown virtually ended the war, with the British still in possession of New York City and other important points, Washington realized that much remained to be done. After spending a few days at Mount Vernon, he and his wife set forth for Philadelphia. All along the route they were met with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of joy, while the "Pennsylvania Journal," of November 28th, thus recorded their entry into the "City of Brotherly Love": "Arrived in this city, His Excellency, General Washington, our victorious and illustrious Commander-in-Chief with his Lady. All panegyrick is vain, and language too feeble to express our ideas of his greatness."

While in Philadelphia, the Washingtons made their home in the house of Mr. Benjamin Chew, on Third Street, between Walnut and Spruce, a fine large mansion, with a beautiful garden reaching out toward Second Street. At this time Mrs. Washington seems to have striven to rise above the deep sorrow that filled her heart, and to enter with her husband into the nation's joy over a great and hardly-earned victory. Philadelphia blazed with illuminations and transparencies; those exhibited by Mr. Peale at the windows of his home at the

Digitized by Google

corner of Third and Lombard Streets being the work of this distinguished artist, were especially fine. Here, encircled with stars and flowers-de-luce, palms, laurels, and rays of glory, were the portraits of Washington and Rochambeau, with the words, "Shine, Valiant Chiefs," above their heads in dazzling letters, while upon a lower window the name of Cornwallis appeared upon a ship, with the French colors flaunting above those of Britain, in recognition of the foreign ally who had proved that "a friend in need is a friend indeed." The French minister, a few days later, "entertained his excellency, general Washington, and his lady, the lady of General Greene, and a very polite circle of the gentlemen and ladies, with an elegant Concert, in which an Oratorio, composed & set to music by a gentleman whose taste in the polite arts is well known, was introduced." Alexander Quesnay de Glouvay, a French gentleman, who lived on Second Street, gave a varied and brilliant entertainment at the Southwark Theatre, in which the plays of "Eugenie" and the "Lying Valet" were followed by an illumination in which the thirteen States were represented by thirteen columns blazing with light, while a cupid supported a laurel crown over the motto, "Washington, — the pride of

Digitized by Google

his country and the terror of Britain." Why cupid was selected for this coronation instead of Mars or Minerva is not explained by the French gentleman or his chronicler. On Christmas day the General and Mrs. Washington dined with their good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morris, at their home on Front Street.

The Washingtons remained in Philadelphia for some months. On March 21st they attended the Commencement of the University of Pennsylvania, on Fourth Street, below Arch, and the next day set forth for Newburgh, accompanied by a large escort, which included "Captain Morris's troop of city light horse." On their journey northward they stopped at Burlington and Morristown, reaching Newburgh, by way of Pompton and Ringwood, on the thirty-first of March.

Digitized by Google

VIII

AFTER THE WAR

"I CAN truly say, that the first wish of my soul is to return speedily into the bosom of that country, which gave me birth and, in the sweet enjoyment of domestic happiness and the company of a few friends, to end my days in quiet, when I shall be called from this stage." So wrote Washington from Newburgh, in June, 1782; and we may be sure that this was also the first desire of Mrs. Washington's home-loving soul. Although a cessation of hostilities had been agreed upon by Parliament, nearly eighteen months of camp life lay before the General, and many trials and difficulties incident to the disbanding of an army whose just demands the treasury of the new nation was inadequate to meet.

The Newburgh headquarters had, at an earlier date, been established in the house of Colonel Thomas Ellison, which was beautifully situated upon the bluffs bordering the Hudson; but in the spring and summer of 1782, the

Digitized by Google

Washingtons were domiciled in the Hasbrouck house, named after Jonathan Hasbrouck, one of the good Huguenot founders of Newburgh. In this not very commodious one-story dwelling, containing seven rooms, the General and Mrs. Washington entertained many distinguished guests, among them the Count de Rochambeau and the Marquis de Chastellux.

Of his visit to headquarters the latter wrote:

"At six o'clock I arrived at Newborough, where I found M. & Madame Washington, Colonel Tighman, Colonel Humphreys and Major Walker. The headquarters at Newborough consists of a single house, & this house which is built like a Dutch cabin is neither vast or commodious. The largest room, which was the living room of the proprietor and his family, & which General Washington has made a dining-room, is spacious but it has seven doors and a single window. . . . I found the company assembled in a small room, which is used as a parlor. At nine o'clock supper was served, and when bed time came, I recognized that the chamber to which the General conducted me was the parlor, in which a camp-bed had been placed. We assembled, the next morning, for breakfast, at ten o'clock, and while we were at table, the camp-bed was folded up and my chamber became a reception room for the afternoon; for American manners do not permit a bed in a room where company is received, especially where there are women. The

Digitized by Google

smallness of the house and the inconvenience to which M. & Madame Washington were put to receive me made me apprehensive that M. de Rochambeau, who started one day after me, might make equally good time & and arrive at Newborough while I was still there. I took upon myself to send a messenger to Fishkill, to ask him to sleep there. My precaution was not useless, as my express found him arrived at the Landing, where he slept & thus did not join us until the next morning when I was about to take my departure."[1]

Here may still be seen this oddly constructed dining-room, which also served the General as an office and reception room. Many pleasant sociable hours, as well as busy ones, were spent in this quaint apartment, when Steuben, Lafayette, Knox, and the young staff officers joined the circle around the great fireplace, and Mrs. Washington and her guests, attracted by the merriment in the dining-room, would come in from the parlor to enjoy Lafayette's spirited description of his difficulties in finding his way to Knox's quarters to call upon his wife, or to hear his brother officers chaff Baron Steuben upon his "Hudson whale," which proved to be an eel of rather large dimensions.

The quarters of General Knox were in an-

[1] Voyages de M. le Marquis de Chastellux, vol. ii. pp. 234, 235.

Digitized by Google

other Ellison house, some distance from the river, and near the artillery camp. In this house Mrs. Knox held her *soirées*, at one of which General Washington opened the ball with Maria Colden, and danced with other belles of the country-side. In honor of the event, or as a tribute to their charms, a French officer who was present inscribed with his diamond ring the names of Maria Colden, Getty Wynkoop, and Sallie Jansen, upon one of the small window-panes of the principal room, — "a fragile reminder," says a family historian, "yet one outlasting, possibly, even the epitaphs of the same ladies engraven on stone." [1]

While the Washingtons were at Newburgh, a brilliant entertainment was given at West Point in honor of the birth of the ill-starred little Dauphin of France. The General and Mrs. Washington, in company with such guests as Governor Clinton and his wife, Mrs. Livingston, wife of the Chancellor, and Mrs. James Montgomery, sailed down the river to West Point in barges gayly decorated with flowers and laurel wreaths. Here there was a grand parade of the troops on both sides of the river,

[1] This pane of glass, with the three names written upon it, has been removed from the old house, and is now in the possession of a member of the Ellison family in New York.

Digitized by Google

a *feu de joie*, discharges of artillery, fireworks, and toasts galore. An elaborate dinner was given, of which over five hundred guests partook, in an immense arbor designed and decorated by Major Villefranche. After the dinner and the fireworks there was a ball, when, says, Dr. Thacher, "General Washington, with a dignified and graceful air, having Mrs. Knox for his partner, carried down a dance of twenty couple in the arbor on the green grass."

The following winter Mrs. Washington was again at Newburgh, helping to celebrate the anniversary of the alliance with France, which had caused such rejoicings at Valley Forge five years before. Of far greater interest to her than the grand parade, the *feu de joie*, or the general gayety that marked the day, was the pardon of all military prisoners, proclaimed upon this occasion. Writing to her sister, Mrs. Bassett, the next day, Mrs. Washington said:

"Yesterday there was an interesting scene at Head-quarters. Over fifty soldiers, thinly clad, and with pale but happy faces, whom the General had pardoned in the morning for various crimes, came to express their gratitude for his mercy and kindness to them. They had come in a body. One of them was spokesman for the rest. My heart was touched and my eyes were filled with tears. I gave the speaker some money to divide among

Digitized by Google

them all, and bade them 'go and sin no more.' The poor fellow kissed my hand and said, 'God bless Lady Washington!' Poor fellows!"

It was during the following summer, when Mrs. Washington remained at Newburgh until the middle of August, that she indulged her taste for gardening. The slope in front of the headquarters, under her skilful hands, bloomed like the desert of the Scriptures. Those who remember the grounds as they appeared forty years ago, recall rows of bricks, still standing, that once formed the borders of Lady Washington's flower-beds.

"Mrs. Washington is on a jaunt to Esopus with the Governor and Mrs. Clinton," wrote the General to Mr. Boudinot in June. Later in the summer the good lady was attacked with a fever, which laid her so low that her husband, who had just returned from an expedition to Crown Point with Governor Clinton, wrote to Mr. Boudinot, in reply to a resolve of Congress directing his attendance at Princeton: "Notwithstanding my horses had arrived but a day or two before, and were much fatigued, I should have set out immediately, had it not been for the indisposition of Mrs. Washington, who, during my absence, had been seized with a fever, had a return of it since, and is now in a very weak

Digitized by Google

and low state." Late in August Mrs. Washington was able to leave Newburgh and make the journey to Princeton, where she remained with the General at his headquarters, Rocky Hill, until November.

These last days of camp life, although full of perplexities to Washington, in which his wife fully sympathized, were illumined by the joyful assurance of a great work accomplished, and the prospect of a speedy return to home and friends. Lund Washington's letters were filled with cheerful accounts of the children at Abingdon, of their health and happiness. In one letter he says, in speaking of Washington and Nelly Custis, "I loved the father and I love the children and wish them every good."

Mrs. Custis sometimes stayed at Mount Vernon with her children, and upon one of these occasions, Lund wrote that Dr. David Stuart, of Maryland, was a frequent visitor at the house. It was *à propos* of the attentions of this gentleman that the General delivered himself of the following oracular period with regard to giving advice to women on the subject of marriage: —

"I never did, nor do I believe I ever shall, give advice to a woman who is setting out on a matrimonial voyage; first because I never could advise

Digitized by Google

one to marry without her own consent; and, secondly, because I know it is to no purpose to advise her to refrain when she has obtained it."

Mrs. Custis, whom Arthur Lee considered "a most tempting widow independent of the jointure land," seems to have experienced no difficulty in obtaining "her own consent," as she married Dr. Stuart soon after the writing of this letter. The marriage proved a happy one, as the doctor made an excellent husband, and a good father to his stepchildren. Mrs. Washington and the General entertained a sincere regard for him, the latter, during his presidential administration, appointing him a Commissioner for the District of Columbia. The newly wedded pair resided at Abingdon, the home of the bride and her children, for some time after their marriage, although Dr. Stuart had two country-seats of his own, Hope Park and Ossian Hall.

On the nineteenth of December, 1783, having a fortnight before taken an affecting leave of his officers at Fraunce's tavern in New York, the Commander-in-Chief reached Annapolis, where he was met by Mrs. Washington, who had driven from Mount Vernon. His arrival in Annapolis was heralded by discharges of cannon and general rejoicings. A grand pub-

Digitized by Google

lic dinner was given, followed by a ball in the State House, which was brilliantly illuminated, and where the hero of the hour led the dance with Mrs. James Macubbin, one of the beauties of Annapolis. The next day a solemn scene took place in the senate chamber of the same old building. General Washington, at his own request and in the presence of the Congress assembled, resigned into the hands of its president, Thomas Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, the commission intrusted to him in Philadelphia more than eight years before.

"There was," says one writer in describing the scene, "neither military nor civic display; about twenty members were gathered; an audience, mostly ladies, sat around Mrs. Washington in the gallery, when, as arranged, the Commander-in-Chief entered the hall with the remnant of his staff, Tench Tilghman and David Humphreys, William S. Smith, Benjamin Walker, and perhaps also, Henry Baylies. Tilghman and Humphreys took their places on each side of his chair, and the words of the simple, dignified address, in which he surrendered his supreme command, were spoken by their Chief."

Mr. Green, editor of the "Maryland Gazette," in alluding to the resignation of his commission by Washington, said, "Here we must

Digitized by Google

let fall the scene — few tragedies ever drew tears from so many beautiful eyes, as were affected by the moving manner in which his excellency took his final leave of Congress."

When Washington turned his horses' heads homeward, he and his wife were escorted by several of his staff officers, and by the Governor of Maryland, William Paca, who accompanied them as far as the South River. The little party passed the night at Queen Anne, dined the next day at Alexandria, and on the evening of Christmas reached Mount Vernon. The delight of the servants, who came forth to meet the beloved master and mistress absent from them so much during the eight years' war, can be better imagined than described. Bishop, now old and silver-haired, came out to the roadside, leaning on his staff, to greet the commander whose youthful triumphs he had witnessed, while his pretty daughter pressed forward to make her best courtesy to Madam, who, as Bishop was proud to say, had "as good as brought up the girl." Some guests from Fredericksburg were in the Mansion House ready to receive the travellers. A *feu de joie* was kept up by the men-servants during the evening, with guns and pistols, which, with the sound of the fiddle and banjo from the negroes' quarters and the happiness

Digitized by Google

of all hearts, made the evening a merry one. The next day many neighbors called to welcome the Washingtons to their home, while the servants on the estate ushered in the holiday week by appearing in their best clothes to wish them a "Merrie Christmas," and to receive their "Christmas box," from the hands of a mistress who never forgot them. One of the young ladies from Fredericksburg staying in the house wrote to a friend of this Christmas: —

"I must tell you what a charming day I spent at Mount Vernon with Mama and Sally. The Gen^{l} and Madame came home on Christmas Eve, and such a racket the Servants made, for they were glad of their coming! Three handsome young Officers came with them. All Christmas afternoon people came to pay their Respects and Duty. Among them were stately Dames and gay young Women. The Gen^{l} seemed very happy, and Mistress Washington was from Daybrake making everything as agreeable as possible for Everybody."

Among the most noted of the callers was Mr. George Mason, of Gunston Hall, whom this lively young lady admired for the grace and dignity with which he carried his sixty years, as well as for his reputed learning and statesmanship. The young officers to whom she refers were Colonel David Humphreys,

Digitized by Google

who later accompanied Jefferson to Paris and held many positions of distinction; Colonel William Smith, who had been a valued officer upon Washington's staff and afterwards married the daughter of John Adams and represented his country abroad; while the third may have been either Tench Tilghman or Benjamin Walker, both of whom were with Washington at Annapolis. Colonels Smith and Humphreys remained at Mount Vernon for several weeks assisting their former commander in the arduous task of arranging the large mass of papers and letters that he had accumulated during the war.

Winter winds and skies seem to have conspired to give the Washingtons the repose in their own home which they so much desired. Soon after his return, the General wrote to his good friend, the Marquis de Chastellux, that he had reached his own "cottage" the day before Christmas, where he had been close locked in frost and snow ever since. So intemperate was the weather, to use the General's own expression, that he was not able to get to Fredericksburg to visit his mother and sister until February. This venerable lady was invited more than once to make her home at Mount Vernon, although her son, in one of his letters, written a little later, told her that

Digitized by Google

he feared she could not there command the freedom and quiet that she needed, as the many visitors coming and going had made his house "little better than a well resorted inn." The dignity and independence that were conspicuous traits in the character of Washington were possessed by his mother to an unusual extent. Proud and fond as she was of "George," she declined to be surprised at his great success and at the honors paid him, because, as she argued with refreshing simplicity, he had "always been a good boy." In the same spirit, she insisted that her modest little home in Fredericksburg had been and always would be sufficient for her needs, resolutely refusing all invitations to live with one of her sons, or with her daughter, Mrs. Fielding Lewis, whose beautiful home, Kenmore, was a short walk from her own house.[1]

As spring opened, many visitors came to Mount Vernon, and the peace under the shadow of their own vine and fig-tree, to which the General and his wife had looked forward, was frequently interrupted. Statesmen, diplomats, and soldiers, native and foreign, inventors, merchants, sculptors, painters,

[1] This small but comfortable house is still to be seen in Fredericksburg, with its garden in which Mrs. Washington received the Marquis de Lafayette, but not until she had finished planting her row of peas.

Digitized by Google

and divines all flocked to this home upon the Potomac. The General recorded, as a noteworthy fact, after they had been at home more than a year, that for the first time he and Mrs. Washington dined alone. Nothing, however, was allowed to interfere with the genuine hospitality of their home, or, as the General expressed himself to a friend: "My manner of living is plain, and I do not mean to be put out by it. A glass of wine and a bit of mutton are always ready, and such as will be content to partake of them are always welcome. Those who expect more will be disappointed." The "glass of wine and bit of mutton," as set forth by the Washingtons, proved a temptation to so many guests that they soon realized that their house was quite inadequate to meet the demands made upon it. Some additions had already been made to what Washington modestly called his "villa" or "cottage." He wrote to his old friend, George William Fairfax, from headquarters at Newburgh: "Your house at Belvoir, I am sorry to add, is no more, but mine (which is enlarged since you saw it) is most sincerely and heartily at your service till you could rebuild it." More extensive additions and improvements were begun in July, 1784, which enlarged the house to more than twice its

Digitized by Google

original dimensions. In this work the General was his own architect, although the plans, especially those which affected the comfort and conveniences of the household, were submitted to Mrs. Washington. The roof was raised to include two full stories with an attic, wings were added, and a wide open piazza was erected on the river front, the full height and length of the mansion. "This broad piazza," says Dr. J. M. Toner, "was a sort of trysting place in summer evenings, where the family, guests, and neighbors in their informal calls, assembled for an hour's chat at the close of day." An inventory of the furniture of Mount Vernon shows that as many as thirty Winsor chairs were purchased for the furnishing of this piazza. A banquet hall was also built, with a fireplace so spacious that when the General saw it he objected to its size, whereupon Lund Washington, who was one of the few persons who ventured upon anything like badinage with him, replied that it *was* large, but that it was exactly the size that Mr. Washington had ordered. Mr. John Hunter, who visited Mount Vernon in 1785, after the improvements were completed, thought the house very elegant, and "something like Chantille [Chantilly], the Prince de Condé's place near Paris, only not quite so large."

Digitized by Google

Despite her genuine, instinctive hospitality, Mrs. Washington's patience was doubtless sorely tried at times by the inopportune arrival of strangers, as when Houdon, the French sculptor, with his three assistants, reached Mount Vernon at eleven o'clock at night, when the household was wrapped in slumber.

Some of the presents sent to the General must also have sensibly disturbed the economy of the *ménage*, as when Lafayette's French hounds appeared upon the scene. If, as Washington recorded in his diary, "they discovered no great disposition for hunting in the field, they so distinguished themselves in the kitchen that one of their number carried off a fine ham that the cook was garnishing for the table, and that Mrs. Washington counted upon as a *pièce de résistance* for a large number of guests, who waited in vain for this especial course. "The lady," says the narrator of this incident, "by no means relished the loss of a dish, which formed the pride of her table, and uttered some remarks by no means favorable to Vulcan, or indeed, to dogs in general, while the Chief, having heard the story, communicated it to his friends, and with them, laughed heartily at the exploit of the stag-hound."

In view of the numerous guests who visited Mount Vernon at all times, in season and out

Digitized by Google

of season, it does not seem strange that a housekeeper or steward should have been required, nor does this fact bear out Mr. Ford's theory that Mrs. Washington was herself an inefficient housekeeper. Her duties as hostess alone were sufficient to employ her time and strength, and the General's letter to Samuel Fraunces, in New York, explains the situation fairly when he applies to him for a trustworthy steward for the household, one who could be "recommended for honesty, sobriety and knowledge of their profession, which is in a word to relieve Mrs. Washington of the drudgery of seeing the table properly covered and things economically used." Again the General wrote that, although the wages demanded by Mrs. Forbes were high, that was a matter of no consequence in view of Mrs. Washington's need of a housekeeper, grasping, with his usual judgment and foresight, the importance of saving his wife from the petty details and worries of housekeeping, in order to insure her leisure to do justice to her guests in the drawing-room.

An atmosphere of constraint and severity has, for some reason, seemed to surround the home life of Mount Vernon, perhaps in consequence of the traditional punctuality, method, and dignity of the master and mistress of the household, and also because the historians of

Digitized by Google

Washington have simply given us the outlines of his home life, without those intimate personal details which, like the lights and shadows in a painting, are as essential to its completeness as the sharper strokes. There has fortunately come down to us through family recollections a sunnier side to the picture; and while there are still living those who can recall reminiscences of grandmothers and great aunts who visited Mount Vernon in their youth, and told them of the simple generous hospitality of that old Virginia mansion, some description of the Washingtons, as they lived in their own home, may still be traced upon paper to serve the generations to come. Something sweet and sacred there is in these treasured family recollections, and, as they are opened for us, we catch a whiff of lavender and rose-leaves from Mrs. Washington's dainty linen-closets. We seem to hear her voice in the hall or garden, directing her numerous servants, or giving the gardener orders about her favorite rose-bushes, while she waits for her husband to come home to breakfast. The morning meal at the Mansion House was not a late one, yet in the busy harvest season the General often rode from one plantation to another, a distance of ten miles, before he sat down to the delicious Virginia breakfast of

Digitized by Google

fresh fish, breakfast bacon, or ham, eggs, corn-cakes, honey and coffee, which his wife delighted to set before him.

Mrs. Washington's grandchildren — George Washington Parke Custis, whom his adopted parents always called Washington, and his sister Eleanor, better known as Nelly Custis, were the children of Mount Vernon, although the two elder sisters — Elizabeth and Martha — were often there. Sometimes the whole family from Abingdon or Hope Park, Dr. Stuart's seat, came to Mount Vernon, and stayed for weeks at a time, in the good old Virginia fashion. In addition to the children of John Parke Custis there were always young people in the house. The General's nephews and his wife's nieces were constantly with them, the former attending school in Alexandria or assisting their uncle with his clerical work, while the latter learned from their aunt many lessons in housewifely arts, which they afterwards recalled with grateful affection. As a result of this pleasant intercourse among the young people, several marriages were made between Dandridges and Washingtons, which, although most agreeable to the two families, have led to such complications in the lines of descent as have vexed the soul of the genealogist even unto this day.

Digitized by Google

Early in the next year Colonel Bassett brought his daughter Fanny to make her aunt a long visit. This young lady, the daughter of Mrs. Washington's favorite sister, Anna Maria, was much at Mount Vernon, before and after her marriage, her first husband being the General's nephew, George Augustine Washington. She always spoke of her aunt as a strict disciplinarian, conducting her portion of the domain with the method and exactness that characterized her husband's management of his. Another niece says that Mrs. Washington was wont to admonish her girl guests to be very still and not disturb the General, when he was occupied with important business, the chief object of her life being to adapt everything in their home to the comfort and convenience of her husband. She would frequently say, with great simplicity and gravity, that his thoughts were the most important things in the world. On the other hand, when the General had no serious questions under consideration, and was at leisure to enjoy the social side of life, Mrs. Washington encouraged the young people in the house to draw him into their pleasures. Nelly Custis, who never seems to have stood in awe of her adopted father, delighted in after life to tell her children and grandchildren how much he enjoyed the society of young people, and how heartily he

Digitized by Google

would often laugh over some merry school-girl prank of hers or her companions. Another person who does not seem to have felt the restraint in the presence of Washington, which has been so much dwelt upon, was Henry Lee,[1] a frequent and favorite guest at Mount Vernon. The General, while Lee was dining with him one day, said that he wanted a pair of carriage horses, and asked Lee if he knew where he could get them.

"I have a fine pair, General," replied Lee, "but you cannot get them."

"Why not?"

"Because you will never pay more than half price for anything; and I must have full price for my horses."

This bantering reply set Mrs. Washington to laughing, and the parrot perched beside her joined in the laugh. The General, taking this assault upon his dignity in good part, said, "Ah, Lee, you are a funny fellow. See! That bird is laughing at you."

The dinner hour at Mount Vernon was three o'clock, a late one for those days. For this

[1] General Henry Lee was the son of Washington's early love, Lucy Grymes. Henry Lee distinguished himself during the Revolution; was afterwards Governor of Virginia, and in his oration upon the death of General Washington originated the now familiar phrase, "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Digitized by Google

meal the General always made his toilet, whether he had been riding or whether he had remained indoors, whether he had company or whether he was alone; and in this respect his household was expected to follow him.

A story is preserved in the Halyburton family of later days at Mount Vernon, when Nelly Custis was a young lady, and Martha Dandridge, a favorite niece of Mrs. Washington's, and other gay girls, were staying there. These young people, having for some reason neglected to follow the rule of the house, appeared at dinner in their morning dresses. The meal proceeded without comment from the hostess; but while still at table, a coach was seen approaching along the drive. There was naturally a flutter of anxiety among the girls, as distinguished guests were always coming to Mount Vernon. The names of the visitors were announced, — some French officers of rank, and Charles Carroll, Jr., of Carrollton; whereupon the young ladies, those foolish virgins of the party who had not their lamps trimmed and burning, begged to be excused to make their toilets, to which Mrs. Washington replied: —

"No, remain as you are, what is good enough for General Washington is good enough for any guest of his."

One version of the story is that the girls

Digitized by Google

appeared in curl-papers; but this we cannot believe, — that any girl of that olden time should have ventured to present herself before the stately and dignified host and hostess of Mount Vernon in anything so unbecoming as *papillotes* is beyond the belief of man, or woman either. The story, without the curl-papers, has come down to this generation upon the best authority, and is so in keeping with the character and ideas of Mrs. Washington, that it carries conviction with it, and with it also an assurance that morning dresses and dishabille never again showed themselves at the Mount Vernon dinner-table.

Dr. McWhirr, who, while instructor in the Alexandria Academy, where the General's nephews were being educated, frequently dined with the Washingtons, said that the awe and restraint felt by many persons in the presence of the host "were relieved by the vivacity and grace of Mrs. Washington." He describes the family seated at table, — Mrs. Washington at the head, Major Washington at the foot, and the General beside his wife, on her left. "The General called upon me," says Dr. McWhirr, "to ask a blessing before meat. When the cloth was about to be removed he returned thanks himself. Mrs. Washington, with a smile, said, 'My dear, you forgot that you had a clergyman dining with

Digitized by Google

you to-day;' to which he replied, with equal pleasantness, 'My dear, I wish clergymen and all men to know that I am not a graceless man.'"

To find the great Washington guilty of a pun, allies him so genially to our every-day human nature that we are willing to overlook its triteness. It is also interesting to learn that Mrs. Washington sometimes administered a wifely reproof to her distinguished husband, and that often, when she had something to communicate or some request to make, at a moment when he was absorbed in his own thoughts, the little lady would seize him by the button of his coat, when, said Nelly Custis, he would look down upon her most affectionately from his superior height, and become attentive to her wishes, which were never slighted.

The young French traveller, Brissot de Warville, said of the Mount Vernon household: —

"Everything has an air of simplicity in his [Washington's] house; his table is good, but not ostentatious; and no deviation is seen from regularity and domestic economy. Mrs. Washington superintends the whole, and joins to the qualities of an excellent housewife, that simple dignity which ought to characterise a woman whose husband has acted the greatest part on the theatre of

Digitized by Google

human affairs; while she possesses that amenity, and manifests that attention to strangers, which renders hospitality so charming."

In April, 1784, the Chevalier de la Luzerne was at Mount Vernon, delighted to renew his acquaintance with the great General, whom he described as a gray-coated farmer, nothing in his surroundings recalling the important part he had played in his country's history except the large number of guests, native and foreign, who gathered about him to do him honor. Late in the following summer the Marquis de Lafayette, for whom, the General says, he looked "with the eyes of friendship and impatience," was welcomed by the Washingtons to their home. Their only regret seems to have been that his wife had not accompanied him. The previous winter Mrs. Washington had sent a cordial invitation to the Marchioness to visit her, to which the French lady, who could not make up her mind to face the terrors of the ocean, replied by sending her felicitations to the General and his wife upon their retirement from public life, and a warm invitation to Mrs. Washington to visit her in Paris. To this courtesy Mrs. Washington replied, through her husband, that she was "too far advanced in years, and too much immersed in the care of her little progeny to cross the Atlantic." In December of the same year,

Digitized by Google

Lafayette was again at Mount Vernon, this time to take a final farewell of his much-loved Virginia friends. The General, who accompanied his guest as far as Annapolis, where an elegant ball was given in his honor, thus wrote to the young Frenchman a few days after his departure: —

"In the moment of our separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all that love, respect, and attachment for you, with which length of years, close connexion, and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I ever should have of you."

The next spring Mrs. Washington received by the same express the sad tidings of the death of her step-mother, and of her brother, Mr. Bartholomew Dandridge. With her, family ties seem to have been very strong. She was deeply attached to her step-mother, while in her brother, a man universally honored and respected, she and her husband lost a valued friend.[1]

[1] Martha Washington Dandridge, who afterwards married Dr. William Halyburton, of Haddington, Scotland, was a daughter of Mr. Bartholomew Dandridge, while his son and namesake was private secretary to the General, and afterwards Secretary of Legation at the Court of St. James, and Consul to San Domingo.

Digitized by Google

Perhaps in consequence of this double bereavement, the wedding of Fanny Bassett to the General's nephew, George Augustine Washington, which was solemnized at Mount Vernon in the autumn of 1785, was a very quiet one. Miss Fanny Bassett had been making her home with the Washingtons for some months prior to her marriage, and was doubtless assisted by her aunt in her preparations for the important event, which the General thus concisely recorded in his diary, after stating that several guests, among them Mrs. Lund Washington, Dr. David Griffith, and the Rev. Mr. Grayson, were staying in the home: "After the candles were lighted George Aug^{e} Washington and Frances Bassett were married by Mr. Grayson." Soon after this wedding Mr. John Hunter, a London merchant, visited the Washingtons, in company with Richard Henry Lee, his son Ludwell, and Colonel Fitzgerald. Mr. Hunter, in his description of his reception at Mount Vernon, has included a pleasant picture of the bride, Mrs. George Augustine Washington: —

"When I was first introduced to him [General Washington] he was neatly dressed in a plain blue coat, white cassimir waistcoat, and black breeches and Boots, as he came from his farm. After having sat with us sometime he retired and sent in his lady, a most agreeable woman about 50, and Major

Digitized by Google

Washington, his nephew, married about three weeks ago to Miss Bessot [Bassett]: she is Mrs. Washington's niece and a most charming young woman. She is about 19. After chatting with them for half an hour, the General came in again, with his hair neatly powdered, a clean shirt on, a plain drab coat, white waistcoat and white silk stockings. At three, dinner was on table, and we were shown by the General into another room, where everything was set off with a peculiar taste and at the same time very neat and plain."

Mr. Hunter seems by some means to have won the confidence of his hostess, perhaps by assuring her of what he recorded in his diary, that the situation of Mount Vernon was the sweetest in the world, as she talked to him with great freedom especially of her army experience. "It is astonishing," he wrote, "with what raptures Mrs. Washington spoke about the discipline of the army, the excellent order they were in, — superior to any troops, she said, upon the face of the earth towards the close of the war; even the English acknowledged it she said. What pleasure she took in the sound of the fifes and drums, preferring it to any music that was ever heard!" [1]

During the early years of their retirement

[1] "Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography," vol. xvii. p. 76.

Digitized by Google

from public life the Washingtons were visited by Samuel Chase, of Maryland; by Noah Webster, the lexicographer; by Alexander Henderson, Elkanah Watson, William Drayton, from South Carolina; General John Cadwalader, and Dr. Jedidiah Morse. The last named guest described the three o'clock dinner at Mount Vernon, at which time they remained at table an hour, every person being called upon to give some absent friend as a toast. After this, he says, the General partook of nothing except "two dishes of tea at half an hour before sunsetting."

In June, 1785, Mrs. Macaulay Graham and Mr. Graham were at Mount Vernon. The learned English lady had crossed the ocean for the express purpose of seeing General Washington, who showed his appreciation of this attention, and of her intelligence, by placing his military record in her hands "for her perusal and amusement." Other amusements were doubtless offered Mrs. Graham during this visit, as she won the admiration and affection of Mrs. Washington, while the General proved his partiality for her by writing to her from New York, after his inauguration as President, to assure her that he and his wife were still as good republicans as she could wish them to be. Mr. Graham is simply mentioned in connec-

Digitized by Google

tion with this lady's sojourn at Mount Vernon. He was many years her junior, and when Mrs. Macaulay added his name to hers she was severely censured by her friends. Kindly Mrs. Warren had, however, a good word for him, her verdict being that he was "a man of understanding and virtue."

Another learned lady who visited the Washingtons was Mrs. Deborah Logan, of Philadelphia, who has left in her diary a pleasant account of stopping at Mount Vernon with her husband, Dr. George Logan, upon their return from a Southern trip in 1788.

"We were received," she says, "by his Lady with much politeness & entertained by her till the General returned from a ride he had taken with a gentleman his guest.

"Dr. Logan was out with Colonel Humphreys, who lived at Mount Vernon, when a Frenchman called with letters to the General and waited his arrival in the parlour.

"The General was at this time rather too much teized with such company, & neither the manners nor appearance of the present guest proclaimed him to be of great respectability. Upon General Washingtons entrance, he presented him his letters of Interduction, & was courteously received. Mrs. Washington introduced me in a low voice, & ye General not hearing my name & seeing no

Digitized by Google

other Gentleman, thought I was the wife of the Frenchman I suppose, for he directed all his conversation to me & at length said, 'How long have you been in this Country Madam? for you speak our language admirably well,' vexed at his thinking I belonged to the Frenchman, I very quickly replied, 'I am an American, the wife of Dr. Logan.' The General rose & welcomed me, & after dinner when the foreigner had taken his leave, he apologised in the politest manner for his mistake.

"I do not think it easy for one human being to respect & venerate another more than I did this truly great man." [1]

Robert Edge Pine, an English artist, was at Mount Vernon in the spring of 1785, painting portraits of the General and of Mrs. Washington's two grandchildren, Elizabeth and Washington. The former represents a lovely girl of nine, with a profusion of brown curls, while the latter is a graceful picture of a boy of four or five, with a bow or branch in his hand. The latter, in his recollections of his adopted father, speaks of a miniature of Mrs. Washington which the General always wore around his neck, suspended by a gold chain and resting upon his breast, but does not say by whom

[1] Extract from the unpublished manuscript of The Life of Dr. George Logan of Stenton, by Frances A. Logan.

Digitized by Google

this miniature was executed. Pine painted a miniature of Mrs. Washington in 1785, and Charles Willson Peale painted one of her when she was a much younger woman.[1]

"Most of the legislatures have appointed, and the rest it is said will appoint, delegates to meet in Philadelphia on the second Monday in May next in a general convention of the States, to revise and correct the defects of the federal system." So wrote Washington in March, 1787, and a few weeks later, after visiting his mother and sister, who were dangerously ill at Fredericksburg, he set forth for Philadelphia. Mrs. Washington did not accompany her husband upon this journey, but remained at Mount Vernon with her little grandchildren, and Mr. and Mrs. George Augustine Washington, and Mr. Tobias Lear. This young gentleman, a New Englander by birth and a Harvard graduate, came to Mount Vernon in the capacity of private secretary to the General and tutor to the Custis children. He soon became a valued friend of the Washingtons, entering with them into all their social pleasures. He was of great assistance to Mrs. Washington in dispensing the hospitalities of Mount Vernon, and of the

[1] This Peale miniature was designed for John Parke Custis, and is now in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Beverly Kennon, of Georgetown, D. C.

Digitized by Google

presidential mansions in New York and in Philadelphia.

Although Mrs. Washington seems never to have urged the General to turn aside from what he considered his duty to his country, she must have seen him set forth upon this journey with considerable solicitude. He was far from well, having, as he himself records, been suffering from "a rheumatic complaint for six months," beside which his mind was oppressed by the illness of his mother and sister, and the recent death of his brother, John Augustine, who was, he says, "the intimate companion of my youth and the friend of my ripened age."

During the absence of her husband Mrs. Washington entertained numerous guests, among them Mr. Samuel Vaughan, from London, who had sent the General a beautiful Italian chimney-piece, which is still to be seen in the drawing-room at Mount Vernon, while Washington in Philadelphia wrote in his journal of dinners, visits, and tea-drinkings at the Willings', Peters', Merediths', Penns', Hamiltons', Logans', and Mifflins'. One of the most notable social events of this visit was the marriage of Miss Peggy Chew, of Meschianza fame, to one of Washington's brave young officers, Colonel John Eager Howard, of Baltimore. Upon this occasion the General writes: "Dined at Mr.

Digitized by Google

Chew's with the Wedding guests. Drank Tea there in a very large Circle of Ladies." It is interesting to note that, the war being over, Washington at once resumed his friendly relations with the Chews, Penns, Hamiltons, and others whom differences of opinion had separated from him during its progress.

In October, when the Mount Vernon grounds were all in the beauty of autumn color, the General and Mrs. Washington enjoyed a visit from their good friends Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Powel, of Philadelphia. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, of South Carolina, also visited them on their return from the Federal Convention. The Powels rode over to Belvoir with the Washingtons to view the ruins of the Fairfax house, and a fortnight later were again at Mount Vernon, probably *en route* for home. Robert and Gouverneur Morris were both here during this autumn, and the following May Mrs. Washington had the pleasure of a visit from her dear friend Mrs. Robert Morris, her two sons, Robert and Thomas, who had recently returned from Europe, and her daughter Hetty. Mrs. Morris and her children were on their way to meet Mr. Morris in Richmond, and upon their return from that place in July, they all stopped at Mount Vernon for several days. At the conclusion of this visit the Washingtons

Digitized by Google

helped to speed their departing guests as far as Alexandria, where, says the General, "we all dined (in a large Company) at Mr. Wm. Hunters."[1]

The Washingtons in these days seem to have frequently dined abroad, at Abingdon, at the Fendalls' in Alexandria, with Colonel and Mrs. Henry Lee, with Dr. William Herbert, and with their neighbor, Mr. George Digges.

Upon their journey to Fredericksburg, in June, 1788, they dined and lodged at Colonel Thomas Blackburn's. This trip to Fredericksburg was, as the General said, intended as a visit to his mother. He and Mrs. Washington, however, lodged and kept their horses at Kenmore, the home of Mrs. Fielding Lewis, and were obliged to devote much of their time in attending a series of dinner parties given to them in this hospitable town. One evening Mrs. Lewis had Mr. Fitzhugh, of Chatham, Colonel Carter and Colonel Willis, with their ladies, to meet the Washingtons; the next day there was a large dinner party at Mansfield, the seat of Mr. Mann Page; and on the day after they visited General Spotswood and dined at his home. The last day of this visit was Sunday, and the General records that they went to St. George's Church. Here the crowd

[1] Washington after the Revolution, by William S. Baker.

Digitized by Google

was so great, in consequence of the presence of the distinguished visitors, that an alarm was raised that the gallery at the north end of the church was about to fall, and although, as Washington wrote, the alarm was "without cause, the congregation was thrown into the utmost confusion; and in the precipitate retreat many got hurt." After church there was a large dinner company at the house of Colonel Willis. The General and Mrs. Washington took leave of their friends in the afternoon, and crossing the river visited Chatham, the home of the Fitzhughs, a beautiful Colonial mansion, with spacious rooms and extensive wings, which from its series of terraces commands a fine view of the picturesque shores of the Rappahannock. Here they were entertained over night, or as much of it as travellers could claim who were upon the road again by five o'clock in the morning.

Upon this trip to Fredericksburg, Mrs. Washington saw her mother-in-law for the last time, although the General visited her again in March, before setting out for the inauguration in New York. Mr. Alexander Donald, who stayed at Mount Vernon soon after the General's return from the sessions of the Convention in Philadelphia, wrote to Mr. Jefferson "that although Washington appeared to be earnestly

Digitized by Google

against going into public life again, pleading as excuses his love of retirement and his advanced age, he, Mr. Donald, thought from what had passed between them in a long and serious conversation and from some remarks made by Mrs. Washington, that he might be induced to appear once more upon the stage of public life." The conflict between duty and inclination was a sharp one, during the months that intervened between the Congress of 1787 and the final ratification of the Constitution by a majority of the States, as intimations came to Washington from many sources that he would be the natural choice of a people who loved and trusted him beyond any man in the nation. This delay, and that occasioned by the tardy assembling of Congress in New York to hear the report of the presidential electors, were hailed by Washington as a reprieve; and as if to take advantage of the sweets of the family and country life that would not much longer be his, he made many neighborly visits with Mrs. Washington, pruned and grafted his trees, attended meetings of the Potomac Company, and hunted the fox in company with Colonel Washington, Colonel Humphreys, and Mr. Lear.

Among guests entertained at Mount Vernon in this interval were the Comte de Moustier,

Digitized by Google

his sister, Madame de Bréhan, and her son, who brought with them letters of introduction from Lafayette, and were accompanied by Mr. Victor du Pont. A number of ladies and gentlemen of the neighborhood were invited to dine with these distinguished guests, among them "Mr. Herbert and his Lady, Mr. Potts and his Lady, Mr. Ludwell Lee and his Lady and Miss Nancy Craik." The Comte de Moustier is described as a handsome and elegant man, while his sister, the Marchioness, who was small and somewhat eccentric in manners, was possessed of considerable talent with both pen and brush. Later, when the Washingtons were in New York, she completed a miniature of the General, begun from memory, which was so pleasing to him that he paid it the high compliment of saying that it was "exceedingly like the original." Madame de Bréhan also executed a portrait in profile of Nelly Custis, in which the graceful, noble lines of the childish head give promise of the great beauty for which she was afterwards distinguished.

This Virginia home, with its simplicity, unbounded hospitality, and cheerful industry, was a revelation to the French lady; and the relations between the Washingtons and their slaves, unlike anything she had seen, seemed to the enthusiastic traveller a survival of the

Digitized by Google

patriarchal dispensation of an older time. She never wearied of following Mrs. Washington upon her round of duties, marking with deep interest the attention given by her hostess to domestic affairs and her care in training and directing her servants. A dream of Arcadian simplicity and happiness it seemed to one accustomed to the artificial life of the French court, — a dream soon to be broken by the official communication brought to Mount Vernon, in April, 1789, by Mr. Charles Thompson, the venerable Secretary of Congress.

Digitized by Google

IX

LIFE IN NEW YORK

THE acceptance of the honors and duties of the chief executive office in the new Republic necessitated for Washington the relinquishing of much that was dear to him. The active, useful life of a country gentleman was especially suited to his tastes, with its experiments in farming or in rearing stock, its days spent in the saddle, superintending the work of fencing and ditching or the laying out of roads, varied by an occasional dinner with a neighbor or by the entertaining of guests at home, and we can well believe that he spoke from his heart when he wrote confidentially to General Knox in April, 1789: —

"My movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm."

Digitized by Google

To Mrs. Washington leaving Mount Vernon at this time meant the severing of many cherished family ties. The two younger grandchildren, Eleanor Parke Custis and her brother George Washington, accompanied her to New York, but her elder granddaughters, Martha and Elizabeth, who were in the habit of spending weeks with her at Mount Vernon, remained with their mother at Abingdon. In a letter written to a congenial friend, Mrs. Washington gives full expression to her sentiments upon foregoing the tranquil joys of her home for the pleasures, fatigues, and excitements of public life: —

"I little thought when the war was finished that any Circumstances could possibly happen which would call the General into public life again. I had anticipated that, from that Moment, we should be suffered to grow old together, in solitude and tranquillity. That was the first and dearest wish of my heart. I will not, however, contemplate with too much regret disappointments that were inevitable; though his feelings and my own were in perfect unison with respect to our predilections for private life, yet I Cannot blame him for having acted according to his ideas of duty in obeying the voice of his Country. It is owing to the Kindness of our numerous friends, in all quarters, that my new and unwished for situation is not, indeed, a burden to me. When I was

Digitized by Google

much younger I should probably have enjoyed the innocent gayeties of life as much as most persons of my age; but I had long since placed all the prospects of my future worldly happiness in the still enjoyments of the fireside at Mount Vernon."

Mrs. Washington did not accompany her husband upon his journey to the capital, which was really a triumphal progress, but set forth some weeks later under the care of his nephew, Robert Lewis, and several other gentlemen. Before leaving home, the General had asked his mother to lend her carriage to his wife during his absence. The reply to this request is characteristic of Mary Washington, as are all of her sayings that have come down to us. A very careful woman she evidently was, neither openhanded nor impulsive. "My grandmother was very well disposed to lend the carriage," wrote Robert Lewis, "but on condition that it should be returned when no further use to my aunt." [1]

[1] In reply to a charge, made more than once, that Washington was not generous to his mother, it may be well to state that this coach, for which he paid £40, was one of his gifts to her, made at a time when he evidently did not abound in coaches himself, as his mother's carriage was to serve Mrs. Washington until his own could be returned from New York for her use. From his diary we learn also that Washington was constantly supplying his mother with money, even when he was himself experiencing the want of it for the first time,

Digitized by Google

Young Lewis has left, in his diary, a fresh boyish account of this journey. Of the departure from Mount Vernon he says, under date of May 16th:—

"After an early dinner and making all necessary arrangements in which we were greatly retarded it brought us to 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we left Mt. V. The servants of the house and a number of the field negroes made their appearance to take leave of their mistress, — numbers of these poor wretches seemed most affected, my aunt equally so. — We travelled together as far as Alexandria and left my aunt at her request to proceed to Doct^r Stuarts. Thornton and myself put in at Mr. B—. W—."[1]

Another affecting parting scene the next morning is described by the writer, such as he "never again wishes to be witness to — leaving the family in tears — the children a-bawling — & everything in the most lamentable situation."

The travellers then proceeded to Georgetown, where a pair of fresh horses, proving baulky and managing to break "the swingle-

and was obliged to borrow £10,000 from Captain Richard Conway, for his own expenses before setting out for the capital.

[1] Judge Bushrod Washington, then practising law in Alexandria.

Digitized by Google

trees and the lock, at the end of the pole," they were detained for two hours until Colonel Van Horne sent for others from his farm, when, says the youthful journalist: —

"We again set out for Major Snowden's where we arrived at 4 o'clock in the evening. The gate [was] hung between 2 trees which were scarcely wide enough to admit it. We were treated with great hospitality and civility by the major and his wife who were plain honest kind of folks and made every effort to make our stay as agreeable as possible."[1]

"May 19th. This morning was lowering and looked like rain — we were entreated to stay all day but to no effect we had made our arrangements & it was impossible, — so therefore we took leave of our kind hostess — who insisted that we should always make that a stage whenever we travelled that road, Majr Snowden accompanied us 10 or a

[1] "Montpelier, near Washington, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, was a favorite resting place of Washington's in his trips from Mount Vernon to Annapolis, it being situated on the old Annapolis road. Within a radius of three miles are the old homes of Snowden Hall, Birmingham Manor, and Montpelier House, all originally owned by Richard Snowden, whose father held a major's commission under Oliver Cromwell, and came to Maryland from Wales in the 17th Century. So lavish was the hospitality dispensed at Montpelier House, that less than a hundred sheets in the linen closet was thought inadequate to meet the demand made upon it. The room in which General Washington slept is still shown to visitors." — "Washington Evening Star," April, 1891.

Digitized by Google

dozen miles to show a near way and the best road. In conversation I discovered him to be a man of no inconsiderable possession, — having got a large fortune by his wife, who was an heiress to an immense estate and married him mearly for love, he being a very handsome man. . . . We proceeded as far as Spurriors ordinary and there refreshed ourselves and horses, — parted with our kind conductor, previous to which I discovered him to be a complete horse jockey. — Mrs. Washington shifted herself here, expecting to be met by numbers of gentlemen out of B—re— [Baltimore] in which time we had everything in reddiness, the carriage, horses etc. all at the door in waiting. Our journey commenced again."

At Hammond's ferry, which young Lewis describes as not over forty feet wide but very deep, he says: —

"We put the coach on board the boat, — leaving the horses and servants behind, — and embarked The wind by this time had risen almost to a storm — the waves running very high, the boat took in a great deal of water which frightened my aunt a good deal; — however by the exertion of our ferrymen with the assistance of Col. V. H. and myself we reached the opposite shore, where we were met by several gentlemen from B— [Baltimore] who had come out for the purpose of escorting Mrs. W— into the town. The party consisted of Doct

Digitized by Google

McH—[1] Capt B— Col° B— [Bullard] and one or two other gentlemen whose names I do not recollect — The servants, horses, baggage etc. was soon over when, we formed ourselves in line of march and moved slowly on until we arrived at Mrs. Carrolls where we had been invited by a messenger who met us on the road for the purpose.[2] Observing the house to be much crowded the gentlemen proposed we should go into town and return in the evening to accompany Mrs. W— to Doc^tr McH— as she had promised to take tea and spend the evening with Mrs. McH— Mrs. Carroll expected Mrs. W—. had made considerable preparation, — we found a large bowl of salubrious ice punch with fruits etc., which had been plucked from the trees in a green house, lying on the tables in great abundance; — these after riding twenty-five or thirty miles without eating or drinking was no unwelcome luxuries, however, Mrs. Carroll could not complain that we had not done her punch honor, for in the course of one quarter of an hour (the time we tarried) the bowl which held upwards of two gallons was entirely consumed to the no

[1] Probably Dr. James McHenry, who had held many positions of trust during the Revolution, and was later appointed Secretary of War to succeed Timothy Pickering.

[2] This fine old Baltimore residence of Charles Carroll's, located on East Lombard Street, is still standing, the broad spiral stairway and spacious hall recalling its former grandeur. Some Hebrew letters over the handsome doorway announce that the services of the synagogue are held in one of the large rooms, while the remainder have become the cheap lodgings of a squalid population.

Digitized by Google

little satisfaction of us all. We then made our conges and departed, the gentlemen to their respective homes, — myself with Dr. McHenry, who invited me very politely to take a family dinner with him."

In the evening there was a display of fireworks, followed by a reception at Dr. McHenry's, where a number of ladies were assembled to pay their respects to Mrs. Washington. Unhappily the young journalist finds the names of these fair dames too numerous to insert, although he says that they were "the handsomest assortment of women that I had ever seen," the sincerity of which admiration he proved by himself falling a victim to the charms of one of the company. Of this lady he says with refreshing naïveté: —

"I attached myself entirely to a Miss Spear who was remarkably talkative & seemed to be pretty well acquainted with my friend Robert Mercer, which afforded considerable fund of conversation, — the evening concluded with an elegant entertainment and fire works which were judiciously managed by a brother of Doct^{r} M^{c}H—s. The company did not retire until after eleven o'clock, — I saw Miss Spear home who appeared much pleased with my attentions; — & insisted that I would never go through Baltimore without calling on her; — she intreated me to come in, but it being

Digitized by Google

late; & a young gentleman in company with me I thought it prudent to return with him. . . . I now made haste back to the Doc^r^ expecting to be locked out, but was mistaken as I found the Doc^r^ seated at table with some gentlemen drinking wine."

Young Lewis was invited to join the party; but sleep being more congenial to his feelings than further conviviality, he asked to be shown to his room. Nor were the weary travellers allowed to rest after they had retired for the night, as poor Lewis relates that while he was struggling to sleep, and to think of Miss Spear at the same time, a serenade began which lasted until two o'clock in the morning. This left but a short night for repose, as five was the hour for rising in order to leave Baltimore betimes, and thus avoid any further celebrations.

At Chester Mrs. Washington was met by the First Troop of Philadelphia City Cavalry under Captain Miles, by another troop of horse under Captain Bingham, and by a number of distinguished civilians, among them Thomas Mifflin, Governor of Pennsylvania, and the Speaker of the Assembly. The troops formed in two columns and received Mrs. Washington with all the honors due the wife of the great General. Many of those who surrounded her

Digitized by Google

had seen service during the long war, and looking upon her kindly face again they recalled, with grateful emotion, the cheer and helpfulness that she had brought into camp during the darkest days of the Revolution.

At Darby, seven miles from Philadelphia, "this truly respectable personage," as she is called by one of the journalists of the day, was met by a number of ladies in carriages, who joined the military escort and accompanied her to Gray's Ferry, where the travellers partook of a collation at an inn which was much resorted to by gay parties from Philadelphia. Here Mrs. Washington was met by her devoted and congenial friend, Mrs. Robert Morris, who gave Washington Custis a seat in her carriage, while she took a place beside Mrs. Washington and conducted her to her own home on High Street, amid discharges of artillery and enthusiastic rejoicings of the populace. When she reached the Morris house, Mrs. Washington made the only public address of which there is any record. She arose, and standing in the carriage, thanked the troops which had escorted her, and the citizens also, in a few gracious words. Two days later, when the same military escort was in readiness to wait upon her as far as Trenton, Mrs. Washington, with the thoughtful consideration

Digitized by Google

for the comfort of those about her which was one of her strongly marked characteristics, begged them, when a few miles from Philadelphia, to return home, as the weather appeared threatening. Mrs. Morris and one of her daughters accompanied Mrs. Washington upon her journey to New York. The welcome, which met her as she passed through New Jersey, was only second to that which had been accorded the President a few weeks earlier.

At Trenton, where the travellers passed the night, they were entertained by Governor Livingston at Liberty Hall, his residence, which was a short distance from the town. His Excellency the President, Mr. Morris, and other distinguished gentlemen, who had set forth from New York at five o'clock in the morning, met the ladies at Elizabethtown Point. From this place the entire party was conducted over the bay in "the President's Barge, rowed by 13 eminent pilots, in a handsome white dress." On passing the Battery a salute of thirteen heavy guns was fired, and on landing at Peck's Slip Mrs. Washington was welcomed by crowds of citizens who had assembled to testify their joy upon this happy occasion, while prolonged cheers, and shouts of "Long live President

Digitized by Google

Washington and God bless Lady Washington" were heard on all sides.

The President, upon his arrival in New York, had declined all invitations to stop at Governor Clinton's, at the Hon. John Jay's, or at any other private house; consequently a suitable residence was at once secured, and put in order before Mrs. Washington's arrival. This house, at the corner of Pearl and Cherry streets, the former residence of Walter Franklin, and at this time the property of his widow, who had married Mr. Samuel Osgood, was used by the Washingtons during the first year of their official life in New York.[1] The following spring a more commodious house was taken, on Broadway, near Bowling Green, called McComb's new house.[2] The Cherry Street residence, although less spacious than the house on Broadway, and with ceilings so low

[1] This old house on Pearl, or Queen Street, as it was first named, was taken down about 1836. A receipt for the rent, signed by Samuel Osgood, shows that the modest sum of £9 10*s.* was paid for the presidential mansion. Dr. Manasseh Cutler records as a noteworthy fact that Queen Street was a mile in length, with buildings four to six stories high, and that it was sufficiently wide for three persons to walk abreast.

[2] This house, which had been the residence of the French ambassador, De Moustier, was later known as the Mansion House and Bunker's Hotel. The Mansion House, when kept by Bunker, was the leading hotel of New York, says an old resident who recalls its palmy days, and continued so until the Astor House was built.

Digitized by Google

that the ostrich feathers in the head-dress of stately Miss McEvers took fire from the chandelier, at one of Mrs. Washington's receptions, was considered one of the handsomest houses in the town, and is spoken of in a contemporaneous letter as "the Palace."

Although the inauguration ceremonies and festivities were well over when Mrs. Washington reached New York, and the house furnished, there remained for her and her husband the difficult task of arranging the social functions of the executive mansion. While those about them were discussing the question of the title to be used in addressing the new President, whether it should be His Highness, His Serene Highness, His Highmightiness, or simply His Excellency, and whether the receptions of the President and his wife should be surrounded by the ceremony of a court or be characterized by the simplicity suited to a republic, the Washingtons quietly and unostentatiously mapped out their social duties according to their own ideas of propriety. That the two persons who were destined to give form and balance to the political and social functions of the republic should have come from the most aristocratic of the Colonies, and from its most refined and exclusive circle, must be looked upon as something more

Digitized by Google

than a happy accident, unless we count birth, breeding, early surroundings, and all the circumstances that go to form character, simply accidents. An executive mansion presided over by a man and woman who combined with the most ardent patriotism a dignity, elegance, and moderation that would have graced the court of any Old World sovereign, saved the social functions of the new nation from the crudeness and bald simplicity of extreme republicanism, as well as from the luxury and excess that often mark the sudden elevation to power and place of those who have spent their early years in obscurity.

Washington, to whom nothing connected with his office seemed small or unimportant, and who realized that this was naturally a period for the establishment of precedents, gave much time and thought to the proper adjustment of social as well as of political etiquette; in all of which arrangements he was assisted by his former aide-de-camp, Colonel Humphreys, who had recently been Secretary of Legation in Paris. Mrs. Washington warmly seconded her husband's efforts to combine republican simplicity with the form and ceremony befit[illegible]he dinners, levees, and receptions of [illegible] Executive. Thus, although [illegible]ly bowed to each guest as

Digitized by Google

he was introduced to him at his Tuesday afternoon levees, making it very evident that the more familiar handshake was to be omitted, at his wife's Friday evening receptions he chose to be considered simply as "a private gentleman," mingling with the company and entering into conversation according to his own inclination. Upon these occasions he is described as wearing a fancy colored coat and waistcoat, and black small-clothes, without hat or sword, while at his own levees he appeared in "a black velvet coat and breeches, his hair in full dress powdered and gathered behind in a silk bag; yellow gloves and holding a cocked hat with a cockade on it, and the edge adorned with a black feather about an inch deep. He wore knee and shoe buckles, and a long sword with a finely wrought and polished steel hilt; the coat worn over the blade, the scabbard of polished leather."

Mrs. Washington now laid aside the homespun garments in which the citizens of Philadelphia and Baltimore had been proud to welcome her, and appeared in silk, satin, velvet, and lace, as became the wife of the President. She was fifty-seven years of age when she came to New York, and although the portrait by Robert Edge Pine was painted only a short time before, it is so much less attractive than

Digitized by Google

that executed by Stuart, ten years later, that we like best to think of "the first lady in the land" noble and dignified as she appears in this portrait, which makes us realize that she possessed a beauty in advanced years quite different from that of her girlhood, but almost as charming in its own way.

More than one description has come down to us of Lady Washington's Friday evening receptions, with their plum-cake, tea, coffee, and pleasant intercourse, — all ending at the early hour of nine. There was nothing excessive in the gayety of these drawing-rooms, and they may even have been a trifle dull; but the hostess wisely set the fashion of early hours, rising about nine o'clock, and saying, with a graciousness and dignity that well became her, "The General always retires at nine, and I usually precede him." The short evening proved to be like the small caviare sandwiches that are now handed around to whet the appetite, making the guests feel like coming again; for these receptions were largely attended by the old Knickerbocker and Patroon families, — the Vons and the Vans, — as well as by the wives and daughters of all government officials resident at the capital. The President sometimes records, "A great number of visitors (gentlemen and ladies) this evening to Mrs. Washington,"

Digitized by Google

or, "The visitors this evening to Mrs. Washington were numerous and respectable." Can we imagine them otherwise than eminently respectable, those stately dames and courtly cavaliers?

At the President's levees the guests were introduced by one of the secretaries, Mr. Tobias Lear or Major William Jackson, or some personal friend, who was expected to pronounce the name distinctly. Later, when the doors were closed and the circle formed for the day, the President, who possessed the royal trait of remembering faces and associating the name with the face, began at the right hand and passed from one guest to another, calling every person by name, and saying a few words to each one. In these days of hurried official receptions and great crushes, such a levee as this seems dignified and elegant, and yet sociable enough to be removed from any imputation of the monarchical form, towards which some of his detractors accused Washington of tending.

Physically as well as mentally weary Mrs. Washington must often have been during the first weeks of her residence in New York. The day after her arrival, before she had had time to recover from her long journey, or to make herself at home in her own house, a number of visitors called upon her. Among the

Digitized by Google

ladies who hastened to pay their respects to the wife of the President were Mrs. George Clinton, wife of the Governor of New York; Lady Sterling and her two daughters, Lady Mary Watts and Lady Kitty Duer; Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. Langdon, wives of senators from New England; Mrs. M'Comb, the Marchioness de Bréhan; Lady Temple, the American wife of the British Minister; Mrs. Lynch, and Mrs. Elbridge Gerry, the beautiful wife of the senator from Massachusetts. Mr. William Maclay, senator from Pennsylvania, recorded in his diary: "The gentlemen of Congress have, it seems, called on Mrs. Washington and all the Congressional ladies. Speaker Wynkoop and self called on Mrs. Morris half after ten. Not at home. Left our cards. Being in the lady way, we called to see Mrs. Langdon and Mrs. Dalton."

After this informal reception there was a dinner, which, if it was *en famille* and the least showy that Mr. Wingate ever saw at the President's, was attended by a number of officials, among them the Governor of the State, the Ministers of France and Spain, and the Vice-President.

In the absence of Mrs. Washington, the President had been assisted in arranging his household on Cherry Street by his secretaries and by

Digitized by Google

his invaluable steward, Samuel Fraunces, who had formerly kept a public house in New York. Under Fraunces served the redoubtable Hercules, as chief cook. "When," says Mr. G. W. P. Custis, "Fraunces in snow white apron, silk shirt and stockings and hair in full powder, placed the first dish on the table, the clock being on the stroke of four, 'the labors of Hercules ceased.'" The well-known story of the early shad which Fraunces provided for the Presidential table, being aware of Washington's partiality for fish, is vouched for by Mr. Custis, who, as a child of eight or ten, may have remembered the stirring scene. The President asked the price of the delicacy, and when Fraunces stammered out, "Three dollars," Washington thundered forth, "Take it away, take it away, sir; it shall never be said that my table sets such an example of luxury and extravagance."

There was always a steward, to market, engage servants, and superintend the household during the Washingtons' official residence in New York and Philadelphia; and although this functionary relieved the President and Mrs. Washington from the burden of domestic affairs, two persons of such strongly marked character could not fail to impress their own individuality upon their home. This is noticeable in the simplicity of their life when no

Digitized by Google

official function was in order, their family dinners, their early hours, and their avoidance of social engagements on Sunday, a day which was always spent by the President at home with Mrs. Washington and the children, after they had attended church together. The usual record in the President's diary is that he went to St. Paul's Chapel or Trinity Church in the forenoon, and was at home writing private letters in the afternoon. Mrs. Washington was not only an attendant upon the services of the Church of England, but was a regular and devout communicant. It has been stated that General Washington was not a communicant of the Church, which idea probably arose from the fact that he did not commune regularly during his life in New York and Philadelphia. As a proof that he was in the full communion of his church, such authorities and eye-witnesses have been cited as the Rev. Lee Massey, Dr. Johnes, of Morristown, General Robert Porterfield, of Augusta County, Virginia, and Major Popham.[1]

[1] The pew used by the Washington family in St. Paul's Church was next to that of Chief Justice Morris. Major Popham wrote, many years later, to Mrs. Jane Washington: "I constantly sat in Judge Morris's pew, and I am as confident as a memory now labouring under the pressure of fourscore years and seven can make me, that the President had more than once — I believe I may say often — attended at the sacramental table, at which I had the privilege and happiness

Digitized by Google

The Vice-President, John Adams, and his wife were established at Richmond Hill, which Mrs. Adams described most enthusiastically in a letter to Thomas Brand-Hollis, telling him of the rural beauty of the grounds, their fine situation above the Hudson, the richness of the foliage and shrubbery, and the serenade which the numerous birds gave her each morning.[1] Mrs. Washington would doubtless have been happier and more comfortable in such a home as this than in the heart of the town during the summer months.

For some reason, whether from ill health or homesickness, or in consequence of the exactions of official life, she does not seem to have been happy during the early part of her stay in New York. This fact can only be gathered from Mrs. Washington's home letters, as her thorough breeding enabled her to conceal her distaste for the restraints of her life, and to

to kneel with him. And I am aided in associations by my elder daughter, who distinctly recollects her grandmamma — Mrs. Morris — often mention that fact with great pleasure."

[1] This house at Richmond Hill, Washington's Headquarters in 1776, was the scene of the Hickey plot. It was situated at the corner of Varrick and Charlton Streets, and was also called the Mortier House, having been built by Abraham Mortier, paymaster in the British army, an old gentleman whose cheerful disposition and extraordinary leanness suggested a *bon mot* to some wit of the day *apropos* of the play "Laugh and Grow Fat," then being given in New York. History of New York, by Martha J. Lamb, vol. ii. 437.

Digitized by Google

perform her duties as hostess with unfailing courtesy. To Mrs. James Warren she wrote at length upon the subject; and after dwelling upon her own and the General's deep appreciation of daily recurring proofs of the nation's confidence in and devotion to him, she added:

"The consciousness of having attempted to do all the good in his power, and the pleasure of finding his fellow-citizens so well satisfied with the disinterestedness of his conduct, will doubtless be some compensation for the great Sacrifices which I know he has made. . . . With respect to myself, I sometimes think the arrangement is not quite as it ought to have been, that I, who had much rather be at home, should occupy a place with which a great many younger and gayer women would be extremely pleased. As my grandchildren and domestic connections make up a great portion of the felicity which I looked for in this world, I shall hardly be able to find any substitute that will indemnify me for the loss of such endearing society. I do not say this because I feel dissatisfied with my present station, for everybody and everything conspire to make me as content as possible in it; yet I have learned too much of the vanity of human affairs to expect felicity from the scenes of public life.

"I am still determined to be cheerful and happy in whatever situation I may be, for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of

Digitized by Google

our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances. We carry the seeds of the one or the other about with us in our minds wherever we go.

"I have two of my grandchildren with me, who enjoy advantages, in point of education, and who, I trust, by the goodness of Providence, will be a great blessing to me."

This letter, which was either dictated by Mrs. Washington or carefully edited before it appeared in print, as it contains none of the homely characteristic phrases to be found in her other letters, doubtless represents truly and fairly her feelings with regard to the life opening before her. Duty rather than inclination was its inspiring motive. To do honor to the high position occupied by her husband, to exact a proper respect toward herself as his wife, caused this simple-hearted and retiring woman to give considerable time and thought to forms and ceremonies.

Some expressions in another letter, written to her "dear Fanny," Mrs. George Augustine Washington, soon after the President's serious illness, when he had left New York to make his Eastern tour, have been quoted to prove that Mrs. Washington was discontented and complaining at this time. The simple little letter, full of messages to her Virginia rela-

Digitized by Google

tives, certainly has in it a note of homesickness, which does not seem strange when we realize that this country-bred woman was spending her first summer in town, and while her husband was away from her must often have been lonely in the midst of many people.

NEW YORK, October the 22nd 1789.[1]

MY DEAR FANNY, — I have by Mrs. Sims sent for a watch it is one of the cargoe that I have so often mentioned to you, that was expected, I hope is such a one as will please you — it is of the newest fashion, if that has any influence on your taste. The chain is of Mr. Lear's choosing and such as Mrs. Adams the vice President's Lady and those in the polite circle wares and will last as long as the fashion — and by that time you can get another of a fashionable kind — I send to dear Maria a piece of chintz to make her frock — the piece of muslin I hope is long enough for an apron for you, and in exchange for it, I beg you will give me the worked muslin apron you have like my gown that I made just before I left home of worked muslin as I wish to make a petticoat of the two aprons, — for my gown — Mrs. Sims will give you a better account of the fashions than I can. I live a very dull life here and know nothing that passes in the town — I

[1] From original in the Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Digitized by Google

never goe to any publick place — indeed I think I am more like a state prisoner than anything else, there is certain bounds set for me which I must not depart from — and as I cannot doe as I like I am obstinate and stay at home a great deal.

The President set out this day week on a tour to the eastward, Mr. Lear and Major Jackson attended him. My dear children has very bad colds but thank god they are getting better. My love and good wishes attend you and all with you. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. L. W. How is the poor child — kiss Maria I send her two little handkerchiefs to wipe her nose.

Adieu

I am my dear Fanny yours most affectionately

M WASHINGTON

A state dinner was given by the President and Mrs. Washington at least once a week. Senator Maclay has described some of these dinners at length, telling of one when, with a number of courses before him, he was so abstemious that he refused a pudding which the host was himself dispensing, because he had already signified that he had finished his dinner. Consistency did not prevent his accepting an offer to drink a glass of wine with His Excellency, especially as, according to Mr. Maclay's observation, he was the only person in the company whom his host so honored. The ceremony of drinking healths seems to have disturbed the

Digitized by Google

equanimity of the Pennsylvania senator, as he tells of his first experience in this exercise with engaging artlessness. After speaking of the elegance of the dinner and its oppressive solemnity, he says: —

"Then the President, filling a glass of wine, with great formality drank to the health of every individual by name round the table. Everybody imitated him, charged glasses, and such a buzz of 'health, sir,' and 'health, madam,' and 'Thank you, sir,' and 'Thank you, madam,' never had I heard before. Indeed, I had liked to have been thrown out in the hurry; but I got a little wine in my glass, and passed the ceremony. The ladies sat a good while, and the bottles passed about; but there was a dead silence almost. Mrs. Washington at last withdrew with the ladies."

At another dinner, when Mrs. Robert Morris was seated beside the President, she found the cream in the trifle so bad that she warned the President not to eat it; but afterwards told Mr. Maclay, with great glee, that "Mrs. Washington ate a whole heap of it," remarking at the same time that it was almost impossible to get an adequate supply of fresh cream in New York. The picture of these two good Pennsylvanians discussing the rural products of New York to their disadvantage savors of latter-day comparisons between the two great cities,— not that

Digitized by Google

Mr. Maclay was always an ardent admirer of his own chief town, as he soundly berated it at times. At this dinner he describes Mrs. Morris as lively and talkative, telling many stories, which, he says, "she did gracefully enough, this being a gayer place, and she being here considered the second female character at court."

Mr. Maclay speaks of the President and Mrs. Washington as seated at table "opposite each other in the middle of the table; the two secretaries one at each end." Mr. Archibald Robertson, the painter, who dined with the family, says that at their informal dinners His Excellency and Mrs. Washington were seated side by side. Mr. Robertson says that while the President was sitting to him for his portrait he left no means untried to place him, the painter, at his ease, introducing him to Mrs. Washington, whose "easy polished and familiar gayety and ceaseless cheerfulness" contributed largely to the desired result, and also secured a pleasant expression for the distinguished sitter. Mr. William S. Johnston, in writing of a dinner at the President's, also speaks of the cheerful, homelike atmosphere which Mrs. Washington spread about her:—

"I have just left the President's, where I had the pleasure of dining with almost every member

Digitized by Google

of the Senate. We had some excellent champagne; and, after it, I had the honor of drinking coffee with his Lady, a most amiable woman. If I live much longer, I believe I shall become reconciled to the company of old women, for her sake, a circumstance which I once thought impossible. I have found them generally so censorious, and envious, that I could never bear their company. This, among other reasons, made me marry a woman much younger than myself, lest I should hate her when she grew old; but I now really believe there are some good old women."

Mrs. Washington certainly had reason to be pleased with this conversion in the senatorial circle, if she knew of it. During her residence in New York she had the pleasure of welcoming to her home such old army friends as Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Greene, who often dined with her and joined the President's theatre parties. When ladies called upon Mrs. Washington it was the duty of Mr. Lear, or one of the other secretaries, to hand them to their carriages; but when Mrs. Montgomery and Mrs. Greene called, the President always honored these two widows of his brave comrades in arms by handing them to their carriages himself.

In the midst of wearisome political and social functions, it is pleasant to read, in the General's New York diary, of frequent drives

Digitized by Google

into the country with Mrs. Washington and the children, and of informal dinners at Captain Marriner's tavern in Harlem with Mrs. Washington, Mr. and Mrs. John Adams, their daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. William Smith and her husband, Governor Clinton, Major Jackson, and Mr. Izard. The house where Captain Marriner kept a tavern at this time was the fine old mansion upon the heights, now known as the Jumel house.

Theatre-going seems to have been a favorite recreation of the Washingtons, both in New York and in Philadelphia. The theatre in the former place is described as a poor sort of affair, capable of accommodating only about a hundred persons. It was situated on the north side of John Street, near Broadway.

The President wrote in his diary, "Monday, November 30th went to the Play in the evening, and presented tickets to the following persons, viz: — Doctr Johnson and lady, Mr. Dalton and lady, Secretary of war and lady, Baron de Steuben and Mrs. Greene." Another theatre party was given a few days later, which included Mrs. John Adams, General and Mrs. Schuyler, and the Hamiltons. A German, named Feyles, was the leader of the orchestra, and had composed the President's March for one of these occasions. The tune was played at the moment

Digitized by Google

when Washington and his friends entered the theatre. It was afterwards slightly altered, and has been known as "Hail, Columbia," ever since.[1]

One evening the President and his party were enjoying Wignell's[2] representation of Darby in the interlude of "Darby's Return," a play written by William Dunlap, in which Darby, an Irish lad, recounts his adventures in

[1] The words of "Hail, Columbia" were written by Judge Joseph Hopkinson, of Philadelphia, and were first sung in the Chestnut Street Theatre by Gilbert Fox, accompanied by a full band and grand chorus. This was in the summer of 1798, when a foreign war seemed inevitable, Congress being in session in Philadelphia to deliberate upon this important subject. Judge Hopkinson himself explained the circumstances under which this national song was written.

Some popular words to be used in the theatre, adapted to the tune of the President's March, were desired. A number of persons had endeavored to compose some suitable words, without success. Judge Hopkinson essayed the task, in order to help a former schoolmate in the theatrical company. The result proved eminently successful, because the verses fitted the time as well as the tune, being truly American and non-partisan. In a few weeks "Hail, Columbia" had taken hold of the popular heart, and established a place which it has ever since held among the national songs of America.

[2] Thomas Wignell was an English actor, who came to America in 1786. He was one of the first actors to present the now familiar Yankee Jonathan upon the stage. Wignell married Mrs. Merry, herself a famous London actress, and was later a successful manager in Philadelphia, where he died suddenly in the Chestnut Street Theatre, from the carelessness of a physician, it is said, who severed an artery while bleeding him.

Digitized by Google

the United States and elsewhere. When he told of what befell him in New York at the inauguration of the President, etc., "the interest expressed by the audience," says Dunlap, "in the looks and the changes of countenance of the great man [Washington] became intense.

"At the descriptive lines, —

'A man who fought to free the land from woe,
Like me, had left his farm a-soldiering to go,
But having gained his point, he had, *like me*,
Return'd, his own potato ground to see.
But there he could not rest. With one accord,
He is call'd to be a kind of — not a lord —
I don't know what; he 's not a *great man*, sure,
For poor men love him just as he were poor,' —

the president looked serious; and when Kathleen asked,

'How look'd he, Darby? Was he short or tall?'

his countenance showed embarrassment, from the expectation of one of those eulogiums which he had been obliged to hear on many public occasions, and which must doubtless have been a severe trial to his feelings.

"The President was, however, speedily relieved by Darby's declaration that *he had not seen him.*"

There was little gayety in New York after the first flutter of the inauguration festivities, in consequence of the severe illness of the

Digitized by Google

President, which was followed by the death of his mother in September. In October Washington set forth upon his Eastern tour, from which he did not return until the middle of November.

On the first of January, 1790, the principal gentlemen of New York waited upon the President, in accordance with a pleasant Dutch custom then universally prevalent in their city, to pay him the compliments of the season. The same evening, when Mrs. Washington held her drawing-room, she said, "Of all the incidents of the day, none so pleased the General, as the friendly greetings of the gentlemen who visited him at noon." When the President learned that it was an annual custom, derived from Dutch forefathers, he observed, after a short pause: "The highly favored situation of New York will, in the process of years, attract numerous emigrants, who will gradually change its ancient customs and manners; but let whatever changes take place, *never forget the cordial, cheerful observances of New Year's day.*"[1] This New Year's day in New York is described as equal in mildness to a May day: the surrounding farmers were able to plough

[1] This prophetic utterance is repeated by Mr. W. L. Stone in his History of New York, as having been related by one who was present upon this occasion.

Digitized by Google

their fields, while women appeared upon the streets in summer dresses. The air was so balmy that the windows of the Presidential mansion were open, while a full moon made the streets so light that the guests who wended their way through them to Mrs. Washington's drawing-room had no need of lamp or linkman. This drawing-room, of more than usual brilliancy, must have presented a scene not unlike that which the brush of Mr. Huntingdon has preserved for future generations. Although the artist himself says that he used as a background for his famous painting the M'Comb house on Broadway, to which the Washingtons did not remove until later, and that he introduced some figures into the group that were not in New York at that time, there could have been no more distinguished company at the Broadway residence than was assembled at the Franklin house at the New Year's reception of 1790. Here was the dignified hostess in her velvet gown over a white satin petticoat, her hair rolled moderately high, not half so high as that of Mrs. Robert Morris, who stands near her, and who appears in one of her portraits with a most imposing structure upon her head. The President stood by his wife's side, or moved from group to group, exchanging a few words with the guests.

Digitized by Google

Among those who surrounded Mrs. Washington were Mrs. John Adams, her daughter Mrs. William Smith; lovely Mrs. James Beekman, who had been the leading belle at the Comte de Moustier's ball; Mrs. George Clinton, her daughter Cornelia, who married Citizen Genet, first minister from the French Republic to the United States; Mrs. Livingston of Clermont, widow of Judge Livingston; Mrs. Robert R. Livingston, Mrs. Montgomery and her sister-in-law, Mrs. James Duane, another Livingston, whose husband was mayor of New York; Mrs. Ralph Izard, better known to the gay world of the metropolis as beautiful Alice de Lancey; Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, born Sally Foster; Mrs. Theodore Sedgwick, from Massachusetts; Miss Wolcott, from Connecticut, who married Chauncey Goodrich, and her sister-in-law Mrs. Olive Wolcott. This lady, although less beautiful than Miss Wolcott, possessed great charm of manner. The British minister, Mr. Liston, observing the grace and dignity with which Mrs. Wolcott moved through the dance, remarked to Mr. Tracy, "Your countrywoman, Mrs. Wolcott, would be admired even at St. James's;" to which the Connecticut senator, his patriotism ablaze, replied, "She is admired even at Litchfield Hill." All gentlemen in official life, with their wives and daughters, paid their

Digitized by Google

respects to Mrs. Washington, and here were also the foreign ambassadors, in their rich costumes glittering with decorations. The line was drawn sharply in those days; none were admitted to Mrs. Washington's drawing-room but those who had a right by reason of official station, or were entitled to the privilege by established merit, character and position. Full dress was required of all, and at a period when the costumes of the men were as picturesque and almost as varied as those of the women, full dress meant more than it does to-day. Mr. Huntingdon says that he chose the time for his picture when many powdered heads were still to be seen among men as well as women, and when knee breeches and long silk stockings, with brilliant knee and shoe buckles, were still in vogue.

Prominent among Mrs. Washington's guests were Chief Justice Jay and his beautiful wife, whose social advantages, at home and abroad, enabled her to give the law in fashion and elegance to New York women, as did Mrs. William Bingham to those of Philadelphia. In Mrs. Jay's home on Broadway she held drawing-rooms only second in importance to those of Mrs. Washington. Here, as we learn from her visiting-list, preserved to this day, flocked all leading men and women of the time, and all

Digitized by Google

foreigners of distinction who came to the capital.

This was the only New Year's day spent by the Washingtons in New York. In July of the following summer it was decided to establish the seat of government upon the banks of the Potomac, while the sessions of Congress were to be held in Philadelphia for the ensuing ten years.

Mrs. Washington remained in New York until the last of August, when she and her husband set forth for Mount Vernon, stopping for some days in Philadelphia. Before leaving New York the President expressed his gratification at the manner in which he had been treated in that city, which he says that he left with reluctance, adding: "Mrs. Washington also seemed hurt at the idea of bidding adieu to these hospitable shores."

Digitized by Google

X

PHILADELPHIA THE CAPITAL

"AND now, at last, we have taken leave of New York. It is natural to look at the prospect before me. The citizens of Philadelphia (such is the strange infatuation of self-love) believe that ten years is eternity to them with respect to the residence, and that Congress will in that time be so enamoured of them as never to leave them; and all this with the recent example of New York before their eyes, whose allurements are more than ten to two compared with Philadelphia." So wrote the Pennsylvania senator, William Maclay, in July, 1790, when it was decided that the sessions of Congress should be held in Philadelphia until the new buildings in the federal city should be ready for occupation.

Mrs. John Adams said, when she came to Philadelphia, that she had left "the grand and sublime at Richmond Hill, the Schuylkill being no more like the Hudson than I to Hercules. Mrs. Lear," she says, "was in to see

Digitized by Google

me yesterday, and assures me that I am better off than Mrs. Washington will be when she arrives, for that their house is not likely to be completed this year. And when all is done, it will not be Broadway. If New York wanted any revenge for the removal, the citizens might be glutted if they would come here, where every article is almost double in price, and where it is not possible for Congress, and the appendages, to be half as well accommodated for a long time."

Others there were who felt differently with regard to the comparative advantages of the two cities. Governor John Page, of Virginia, wrote from New York: "This town is not half as large as Philadelphia, nor in any manner to be compared to it for beauty and elegance;" while Mr. Henry Wansey, who visited the capital a little later, found the manners and styles so like those of London that, while sitting at the theatre, which he described as elegant and convenient and as large as Covent Garden, he felt as if he were still in his own country. Upon evenings when the President and Mrs. Washington were in their box, surrounded by some of the cabinet officers and their wives, and when many fashionable men and women were in the audience, the scene presented must have been a gay one, especially as many of the

Digitized by Google

ladies wore their hair "full dressed without caps," the younger women with theirs flowing in ringlets upon their shoulders, while the gentlemen appeared in round hats, their coats, which were often of striped silk with high collars, cut quite in the English fashion.

The Philadelphia house chosen as the residence of the Chief Executive was one owned by Mr. Robert Morris, and was then numbered 190 High Street, now Market. It was the largest and most suitable house that could be secured for this purpose. With regard to its furnishing and all household arrangements, Mrs. Washington was saved much care by the forethought of her husband and by the admirable executive ability of Mr. Lear. The President's letters to the latter are most explicit, entering fully into the minutiæ of domestic arrangements, even to the exchanging of mangles with Mrs. Morris and to a discussion of the comparative merits of certain butlers and cooks, which ended in the engaging of Mr. and Mrs. Hyde instead of Fraunces, although an advantage that the President set forth in favor of the latter was that he was "an excellent cook, knowing how to provide genteel dinners, and giving aid in dressing them, prepared the dessert, made the cake, etc."

The house on the south side of Market

Digitized by Google

Street, some distance east of Sixth, to which the Washingtons came late in November, is described by Mr. Richard Rush as a large double house, its "whole external aspect marking it as the abode of opulence and respectability." Mr. Thomas Twining, who came to Philadelphia with eyes accustomed to the larger dimensions of Old World buildings, recorded in his diary that

"The President lived in a small red brick house on the left side of High Street, not much higher up than Fourth Street. There was nothing in the exterior of the house that denoted the rank of its possessor. Next door was a hair-dresser. Having stated my object to a servant who came to the door, I was conducted up a neat but rather narrow staircase, carpeted in the middle, and was shown into a middling-sized, well-furnished drawing-room on the left of the passage. Nearly opposite the door was the fireplace, with a wood-fire in it. The floor was carpeted. On the left of the fireplace was a sofa, which sloped across the room. There were no pictures on the walls, no ornaments on the chimney-piece. Two windows on the right of the entrance looked into the street. There was nobody in the room, but in a minute Mrs. Washington came in, when I repeated the object of my calling, and put into her hands the letter for General Washington, and his miniature. She said she would deliver them to the President, and, inviting me to sit down,

Digitized by Google

retired for that purpose. She soon returned, and said the President would come presently, Mrs. Washington was a middle-sized lady, rather stout; her manner extremely kind and unaffected. She sat down on the sofa, and invited me to sit by her. I spoke of the pleasant days I had passed at Washington, and of the attentions I had received from her granddaughter, Mrs. Law.

"While engaged in this conversation, but with my thoughts turned to the expected arrival of the General, the door opened, and Mrs. Washington and myself rising, she said, 'The President,' and introduced me to him."

Back of the house there was a garden, in which were some fine trees, and this garden extended to Minor Street, where were the stables, an important part of the domain to Washington. The nearest house to that of the President was Mr. Morris's own residence at the corner of Sixth and Market streets. Being so near each other, we can imagine Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Morris exchanging all manner of neighborly civilities, while their husbands met together in council, formally and informally. In addition to his own home and the house at 190 Market Street occupied by the President, Mr. Morris owned another house on the same street, in which General Walter Stewart and his beautiful wife, Deborah

Digitized by Google

McClenachan, were domiciled. Colonel Clement Biddle, an old friend of the President's and a former companion in arms, was living at this time at 38 Walnut Street, where the sign of "Notary, Scriviner, and Broker," announced that he had relinquished the sword for the quill. He and his beautiful Rhode Island wife, Rebecca Cornell, had shared with the General and Mrs. Washington the hardships of the winter of 1777 and 1778 at Valley Forge, where Mrs. Biddle's mother-wit and housewifely skill had won for her the Commander-in-Chief's consent to remain in camp with her husband.[1]

Many interesting stories of the President's visits to her father's house on Walnut Street have come down to this generation through Colonel Biddle's daughter, afterwards Mrs. Nathaniel Chapman, who as a child was particularly impressed with the grandeur of his coach-and-four. Miss Susan Binney, who lived with her parents directly opposite the Washington residence, also retained a vivid recollection of the President's coaches. "General Washington," she said, "had a large family coach, a light carriage, and a chariot, all alike cream-colored,

[1] Colonel Biddle resigned his commission before the close of the war, but was made United States Marshal for Pennsylvania in 1787, and in 1794 again took up arms under his old commander when the Whiskey Rebellion called him into the field.

Digitized by Google

painted with three enamelled figures on each panel, and very handsome. He drove in the coach to Christ Church every Sunday morning, with two horses: drove the carriage-and-four into the country. . . . In going to the Senate he used the chariot, with six horses. All his servants were white, and wore liveries of white cloth, trimmed with scarlet or orange."

This chariot with six horses, in which General Washington drove to the Senate, at Sixth and Chestnut Streets, was the most elegant of his carriages. It was built in London expressly for Governor John Penn, from whom it was purchased for the President's wife. It was of cream color, richly decorated with gilt medallions, and was considered by some persons "too pompous for a Republican President." In this chariot Mrs. Washington was often to be seen, and by her side the fair, youthful faces of Nelly Custis, Elizabeth Bordley, the daughters of Robert Morris, and other young ladies with whom Miss Custis was upon intimate terms. Although the equipages of the President and his wife were so handsome as to excite the admiration of Miss Biddle and Miss Binney, the appearance of the Chief Magistrate in public was not sufficiently imposing to satisfy Mr. Jacob Hiltzheimer, as he wrote in his diary: "We met, just below the stone

Digitized by Google

bridge in the meadows, our President Washington, and lady in a coach and four, two postillions, and only one servant on horseback. In old countries a man of his rank and dignity would not be seen without a retinue of twenty or more persons."

As an offset to Mr. Hiltzheimer's disappointment, we give the impressions of another famous chronicler, who describes the Washingtons as they appeared to him one summer day when he passed up Market Street on an errand.

"The reminiscent," he says, "was struck with the novel spectacle of this splendid coach with *six* elegant bays attached, postillions and outrider in livery, in waiting at the President's door, and although charged to make haste back, was determined to see the end of it. Presently the door opened, when the 'beheld of all beholders,' in a suit of dark silk velvet of the old cut, silver or steel hilted small sword at the left side, hair full powdered, black silk rose and bag, accompanied by 'Lady Washington,' also in full dress, appeared standing upon the marble steps — presenting her his hand, he led her down to the coach, with that ease and grace peculiar to him in every thing, and as remembered, with the attentive assiduity of an ardent youthful lover; — having also handed in a young lady, and the door clapped to, Fritz, the Coachman, gave a rustling flourish with his lash, which produced a plunging motion in the

Digitized by Google

leading horses, reined in by the postilions, and striking flakes of fire between their heels and the pebbles beneath — when

> "Crack went the whip, round went the wheels,
> As though *High Street* were mad."

During the early years of this administration the Vice-President and his wife were living at Bush Hill,[1] one of the Hamilton places which Mrs. Adams considered quite remote from the centre of the town, especially as she describes the roads as "all clay, and, in open weather, up to the horses' knees; so that much of my time must be spent at home." Later, when she had recovered from the discomforts that attended her arrival, in the form of fresh paint and cold, damp rooms, and from the disappointment of having her best gowns spoiled upon their sea voyage to Philadelphia, this keen but generally fair-minded lady wrote with enthusiasm of social life at the capital. In speaking of one of Mrs. Washington's drawing-rooms in a letter to her daughter, she says:

"The room became full before I left it, and the circle very brilliant. How could it be otherwise, when the dazzling Mrs. Bingham and her beautiful sisters were there; The Misses Allen and Misses

[1] This old mansion, which was burned down early in the present century, stood upon the now thickly settled portion of the city, near Eighteenth and Buttonwood streets.

Digitized by Google

Chew; in short, a constellation of beauties? I am serious when I say so, for I really think them what I describe them. Mrs. Bingham has certainly given laws to the ladies here, in fashion and elegance; their manners and appearance are superior to what I have seen."

To the pen of an observing and intelligent young lady, Miss Charlotte Chambers, who was visiting Philadelphia in the winter of 1795, we are indebted for a more detailed account of a drawing-room than that of Mrs. Adams:[1]—

"Next morning I received an invitation by my father, from Mrs. Washington, to visit her, and Colonel Hartley politely offered to accompany me to the next drawing-room levee.

"On this evening my dress was white brocade silk, trimmed with silver, and white-silk, high-heeled shoes, embroidered with silver, and a light blue sash, with silver cord and tassel tied at the left side. My watch was suspended at the right, and my hair was in its natural curls. Surmounting all was a small white hat and white ostrich feather, confined by brilliant band and buckle. Punctual to the moment, Colonel Hartley, in his chariot,

[1] Miss Charlotte Chambers, the writer of this letter, was a daughter of General James Chambers of the Pennsylvania line, and a granddaughter of Benjamin Chambers, the founder of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. She married Israel Ludlow in 1796, and with him became a pioneer in the settlement of the State of Ohio.

Digitized by Google

arrived. He brought with him Dr. Price, from England, who has sought America as an asylum, having given some political umbrage to his own government.

"The hall, stairs, and drawing room of the President's house were well lighted by lamps and chandeliers. Mrs. Washington with Mrs. Knox sat near the fireplace. Other ladies were seated on sofas, and gentlemen stood in the centre of the room conversing. On our approach Mrs. Washington arose and made a courtesy — the gentlemen bowed most profoundly — and I calculated my declension to her own with critical exactness.

"The President, soon after, with that benignity peculiarly his own, advanced, and I arose to receive and return his compliments with the respect and love my heart dictated.

"He seated himself beside me — and inquired for my father, a severe cold having detained him at home."

Miss Binney in after years often spoke of Mrs. Washington's drawing-room, which she attended in the company of Mrs. Oliver Wolcott. Upon these occasions, she said, the President came forward and bowed to every lady, after she was seated.

There was much gayety in Philadelphia during the Washington administration. In addition to the Dancing Assemblies, which were held regularly, the balls given upon the Presi-

Digitized by Google

dent's birthday are described by the French traveller De Liancourt as especially brilliant, "the splendor of the rooms and the richness of the dresses" not suffering in comparison with those of European entertainments, while of the beauty of the young women of the city he speaks with enthusiasm; but alas! of the young men of the day he pronounces the withering criticism that "they, for the most part, seem to belong to another species." Of the birth-night ball of February 22, 1795, Judge Iredell wrote to his wife that the occasion was celebrated "with uncommon zeal and attachment," while one of the journals of the day recorded: —

"In the evening the President attended the ball and supper given by the City Dancing Assembly. The rooms were crowded by a brilliant assemblage of the Fair of the metropolis. Near 150 ladies, and nearly twice the number of citizens were present. A greater display of beauty and elegance no country, we believe, could ever boast of. Most of the foreign Ministers attended with their ladies.

"After the supper the President gave the following toast: 'The Dancing Assembly of Philadelphia — May the members thereof, and the Fair who honour it with their presence, long continue in the enjoyment of an amusement so innocent and agreeable.'"

Digitized by Google

Of this same birthday celebration, Miss Charlotte Chambers has left the following description: —

"The morning of the 'twenty-second' was ushered in by the discharge of heavy artillery. The whole city was in commotion, making arrangements to demonstrate their attachment to our beloved President. The Masonic, Cincinnati, and military orders united in doing him honor. Happy republic! great and glorious!

". . . Mrs. Cadwalader was too much indisposed to attend the ball. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, with Dr. Spring, called for me in their coach. Dr. Rodman, master of ceremonies, met us at the door, and conducted us to Mrs. Washington. She half arose as we made our passing compliments. She was dressed in a rich silk, but entirely without ornament, except the animation her amiable heart gives to her countenance. Next her were seated the wives of the foreign ambassadors, glittering from the floor to the summit of their head-dress. One of the ladies wore three large ostrich-feathers. Her brow was encircled by a sparkling fillet of diamonds; her neck and arms were almost covered with jewels, and two watches were suspended from her girdle, and all reflecting the light from a hundred directions. Such superabundance of ornament struck me as injudicious; we look too much at the gold and pearls to do justice to the lady. However, it may not be in conformity to

Digitized by Google

their individual taste thus decorating themselves, but to honor the country they represent.

"The seats were arranged like those of an amphitheatre, and cords were stretched on each side of the room, about three feet from the floor to preserve sufficient space for the dancers. We were not long seated, when General Washington entered and bowed to the ladies as he passed round the room. 'He comes, he comes, the hero comes!' I involuntarily, but softly exclaimed. When he bowed to me I could scarcely resist the impulse of my heart, that almost burst through my bosom, to meet him.

"The dancing soon after commenced. Mr. John Woods, Mr. John Shippen, Lawrence Washington, and Colonel Hartley enlivened the time by their attentions, and to them I was much indebted, for the pleasure of the evening."

Here, as in New York, the Washingtons often attended places of amusement, announcements like the following being frequent in the journals of the day: "The President and his lady went to see Mr. Ricketts Ride": or

"The President honored the following performance by the Old American Company. Mr. and Mrs. Hallam had a benefit on Thursday evening, Dec. 4, at the South St. Theatre — a comedy called 'The Young Quaker; or the Fair Philadelphian' by O'Keefe after which there was a 'pantomimic

Digitized by Google

ballet' of the Two Philosophers, a Musical Piece called The Children in the Wood, a recitation of Dr. Goldsmith's celebrated Epilogue in the character of Harlequin, — the whole performance concluding with a Leap through a Barrel of Fire."

It is interesting to notice that this long and varied performance was begun at quarter after five o'clock, a not inconvenient time, after all, when the fashionable dinner hour was three o'clock. During the early years of the administration theatrical performances were given at the Southwark Theatre; but in 1796 there appears in the journals of the day mention of the Washingtons attending the new theatre, which was on the north side of Chestnut Street, above Sixth.

All fashionable residences, churches, and theatres, were grouped together in the narrow limits of the old city, which reached north and south from Arch to Lombard, and westward barely to Ninth Street, the new executive mansion at the corner of Ninth and Market streets being considered quite "far out of town." Christ Church and St. Peter's were both near the Washington residence; the former, the nearer of the two, was usually attended by the President's family. They are described as entering by the door to the right of the chancel, preceded by a servant in livery

Digitized by Google

who advanced and opened the door of the pew. The entrance of the President was a signal for the congregation to rise, and to remain standing until he and his family were seated. The servant then closed the door of the pew and seated himself on a chair in the aisle, where he remained until the President left the church, when the same ceremony was observed, the servant preceding him and opening the carriage door.

Mr. Wansey has described a breakfast at the President's, when Mrs. Washington herself made the tea and coffee, at her end of the table, and where everything was conducted with great simplicity, one servant, without livery, waiting upon the table. This is undoubtedly a fair picture of the Washingtons in the privacy of their domestic life; yet from other accounts it appears that the President's servants wore livery, and that dinners of considerable style and elegance were given at the executive mansion. In writing to his daughter, Mrs. Thomas Hooper, of one of these dinners, Theophilus Bradbury, member of Congress from Essex County, Massachusetts, says: —

"In compliance with my promise I now sit down to write, and, though I have nothing material to communicate, I am influenced by the pleasure it gives me, at this distance, of conversing with my

Digitized by Google

children in the only way which I can. Last Thursday I had the honor of dining with the President, in company with the Vice-President, the senators and Delegates of Massachusetts, and some other members of Congress, about 20 in all. In the middle of the table was placed a piece of table furniture about six feet long and two feet wide rounded at the ends. It was either of wood gilded, or polished metal, raised only about an inch, with a silver rim round it like that round a tea board; in the centre was a pedestal of plaster of Paris with images upon it, and on each end figures, male and female of the same. It was very elegant and used for ornament only. The dishes were placed all around, and there was an elegant variety of roast beef, veal, turkeys, ducks, fowls, hams, &c ; puddings, jellies, oranges, apples, nuts, almonds, figs, raisins, and a variety of wines and punch. We took our leave at six, more than an hour after the candles were introduced. No lady but Mrs. Washington dined with us. We were waited on by four or five men servants dressed in livery."

Despite the magnificent table ornaments which the Hon. Mr. Bradbury described with such elaboration, Mr. Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, wrote to his wife: "The example of the President and his family will render parade and expense improper and disreputable." This statement, and others made

Digitized by Google

by visitors to the capital, would lead us to believe that the dinners given by the Washingtons were less sumptuous than those of many prominent Philadelphians, and that the simplicity and genuine hospitality that graced the table at Mount Vernon, to a certain extent, characterized even the state dinners of the President. He always asked a blessing at his own table when no dominie was present, says Dr. Ashbel Green, who relates that upon one occasion, "when his mind was probably occupied with some interesting concern, in going to the table the President began to ask a blessing himself. He uttered but a word or two, when bowing to me, he requested me to proceed, which I accordingly did." Dr. Green also says that at dinner parties Washington allowed five minutes for the variation of timepieces, and after that, when tardy members of Congress appeared after the dinner was begun, his rather sarcastic apology was: "Sir, or gentlemen, we are too punctual for you; or Gentlemen, I have a cook who never asks whether the company has come but whether the hour has come." John Adams wrote to his wife of dining at the President's with the celebrated Dr. Joseph Priestly, and with young Lafayette and his tutor, Mr. Frestel.

With other guests of a less conventional

Digitized by Google

type Mr. Adams also dined at the executive mansion, as he recorded: —

"Yesterday I dined with the President in company with John Watts, the King of the Cherokees, with a large number of his chiefs and their wives; among the rest, the widow and children of Hanging Man, a famous friend of ours, who was basely murdered by some white people. The President dined four sets of Indians on four several days the last week."

Great attention seems to have been paid to Indians, live and dead, during this administration. The Washingtons were seriously inconvenienced by the numbers of Indians who visited them at Mount Vernon, and the President, after entertaining a dozen Catawbas, in the summer of 1796, expressed a hope that the Cherokee chiefs would not arrive until after his own departure. In describing the funeral honors paid to the body of a young Indian chief, the Rev. Manasseh Cutler, who witnessed the procession from the President's house in Philadelphia, says, with a strangely modern note in his phrasing: "I had the honor of taking a fine view of the whole at a window, where there were only two others — Mistress President of the United States and Mistress Secretary of the War Department [Mrs. Knox].

Digitized by Google

And I assure you I thought myself as much *honored* as the *dead Indian* they were parading through the streets."

During her longer residence in Philadelphia, surrounded by old friends, Mrs. Washington evidently led a life more congenial to her tastes than that in New York. Notwithstanding the testimony of such intelligent observers as Mr. Breck, the Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, and Mr. Wansey, with regard to the extravagance and luxury that prevailed in this city, there was, perhaps in consequence of the large Quaker element in the community, much simplicity in certain circles and great domesticity in family life. This homelike atmosphere rendered Philadelphia especially congenial to Mrs. Washington. Many of the well-to-do residents of the narrow strip along the Delaware, which then constituted the city, owned country places on the Schuylkill, at the Fox Chase, and in and around Germantown. In these rural homes a hospitality was extended that must often have recalled to the Virginia woman the generous living of the Old Dominion. Her carriage was frequently to be seen upon the roads around Philadelphia, when she was on her way to visit Mrs. Robert Morris at her country seat, The Hills, or Mrs. John Penn at Landsdowne, or upon the Germantown road *en route* to the

Digitized by Google

Logans at Stenton, or the Chews at Cliveden. Mrs. Washington was punctilious in observing the good old-time custom of returning her visits on the third day. Miss Binney said that when she called upon her mother, who lived opposite, Mrs. Washington was always escorted by one of the secretaries, Mr. Lear or Major Jackson. These gentlemen also accompanied the President upon his daily constitutional, when they would invariably cross to the sunny side and walk down Market Street together in silence. This young lady, who, from her window, watched the three handsome gentlemen in their cocked hats and picturesque attire, in recalling the scenes of her youth for the benefit of a later generation, says that she often wondered why they never seemed to have anything to say to each other, knowing that Washington was upon most friendly terms with his two secretaries.

Visits of friendship, as well as of ceremony, were made by the President and Mrs. Washington upon such families as the Willings, Binghams, and Powels. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Powel were close friends of the Washingtons. Mr. Samuel Powel was a man prominent in public life, having been mayor of Philadelphia before and after the Revolution, while of the attractions of his wife, which Mrs. John Adams con-

Digitized by Google

sidered only excelled by those of her niece, Mrs. Bingham, the New England lady wrote to her daughter: "Mrs. Powell, I join the general voice in pronouncing, a very interesting woman. She is Aunt to Mrs. Bingham, and is one of the ladies you would be pleased with. She looks turned of fifty, is polite and fluent as you please, motherly and friendly. . . . Of all the ladies I have seen and conversed with here, Mrs. Powell is the best informed." The Powels lived in a large house then numbered 112 South Third Street.

Mrs. William Bingham, Mrs. Walter Stewart, Mrs. Richard Durdin, and Mrs. John Travis (one of the lovely Bond sisters) were among the Philadelphia beauties of this administration. Mrs. Durdin was an intimate friend of the Washingtons, and often entertained them at her house on Walnut Street. She afterwards married William Lewis, who held the positions of District Attorney and District Judge under Washington. Mr. Lewis began life as a Chester County farmer, and later became so distinguished in his profession that he could afford to entertain his friends by telling them how Alexander Hamilton had once outwitted him. Another great lawyer, who lived on Market Street above Eighth, was William Rawle, who had married a lovely Quakeress,

Digitized by Google

Sarah Coates Burge. The Washingtons frequently dined with Mr. and Mrs. Rawle, and upon one occasion, while his "elders and betters" were at dinner in the early afternoon, as was the custom in those days, Mr. Rawle's son William, seeing the General's cocked hat and dress sword upon the hall table, put the hat on his head, and with the sword in his hand stepped out into the street and strutted up and down, to the great amusement of the small boys in the neighborhood and of the passers-by in general.

Stories of this old-time social life have floated down to us in diaries and letters and from family traditions, telling of informal visits made by the Washingtons to such homes as those of Myers Fisher at Urie, and of Judge Peters at Belmont. Hours of rest and recreation were those passed at this latter beautiful country seat, amid whose shaded avenues, with their charming glimpses of the river, Washington's thoughts must often have turned to his own home similarly situated upon the banks of the Potomac. Here, in the delightful society of the witty jurist, he could forget for a time the cares of state; for although represented as an habitually grave man, Washington was by no means averse to a joke, and Judge Peters's witticisms possessed the admirable

Digitized by Google

quality of amusing without leaving a sting behind them.

The Bordleys lived on Union Street, near Third. Elizabeth Bordley had been a schoolmate of Nelly Custis at Annapolis, and, accompanied by a mutual friend, Martha Coffin from Portland, had spent many vacations at Mount Vernon. These three friends seem to have done all the fond, foolish things of which the old-fashioned school girl was capable. They wrote romantic letters to each other, many verses (especially Miss Bordley, the one most favored of the Muses), and finally had their portraits painted for each member of the trio. To the latter fond folly this generation is indebted for three lovely pictures. When Miss Bordley, afterwards Mrs. James Gibson, sent hers, which she playfully called the "Rural Lady," to her friend Martha Coffin, who was then living in Portland, she mailed at the same time the following verses: —

"You 'll now receive the 'Rural Lady:'
I fear you 'll think her face too shady;
But that 's the fancy of the painter, —
A very good one, by the bye, —
For if that shade were any fainter,
The wrinkles would appear, — O fye!"

While Mrs. Washington was in Philadelphia she had her older granddaughters with her

Digitized by Google

and some of her nieces. Mr. Adams, in one of his letters, wrote: "Mrs. Washington is very happy at present in a visit from her two granddaughters, N's sisters, as I suppose they are. One of them is a fine, blooming, rosy girl, who, I dare say, has had more liberty and exercise than Nelly." The "blooming, rosy girl" was doubtless Elizabeth Custis, whose portrait by Stuart represents a beautiful young woman. At the age of seventeen she married Mr. Law, a nephew of Lord Ellenborough. Mr. Thomas Twining speaks of meeting Mrs. Law at her grandmother's house in Philadelphia soon after her marriage, and of being entertained at her own home near Georgetown. The other sister of Nelly Custis was Mrs. Washington's namesake, Martha. Judge Iredell says, in writing of a dinner at the President's, "There is now there an elderly sister of Miss Custis's not so handsome as herself, but she seems to be very agreeable." This "elderly sister," Martha Custis, who was about eighteen at the time, became the wife of Mr. Thomas Peter of Georgetown.

When these young people were in the house together there was naturally much gayety and happiness. Mrs. James Gibson, in later years, grew quite indignant over a newspaper article in which it was stated that Washington never

Digitized by Google

danced. She said that he was exceedingly fond of the society of young people, and would often leave his study in the evening to enjoy a Virginia reel with Nelly Custis and her friends. To Mrs. Gibson, who could be grave as well as gay, we are indebted for a very homelike picture of Mrs. Washington and her favorite granddaughter: —

"Mrs. Washington was in the habit of retiring at an early hour to her own room, unless detained by company, and there, no matter what the hour, Nellie attended her. One evening, my father's carriage being late in coming for me, my dear young friend invited me to accompany her to grandmama's room. There, after some little chat, Mrs. Washington apologized to me for pursuing her usual preparations for the night, and Nellie entered upon her accustomed duty by reading a chapter and a psalm from the old family Bible, after which all present knelt in evening prayer; Mrs. Washington's faithful maid then assisted her to disrobe and lay her head upon the pillow; Nellie then sang a verse of some sweetly soothing hymn, and then, leaning down, received the parting blessing for the night, with some emphatic remark on her duties, improvements, etc. The effect of these judicious habits and teachings appeared in the granddaughter's character through life."

Twice, while Philadelphia was the seat of government, was that city visited by yellow

Digitized by Google

fever. Mrs. Elizabeth Drinker and Jacob Hiltzheimer both dwell upon the ravages made among their friends and acquaintances by this dread disease. In August, 1793, there were a number of deaths, and from this time, for some years, there were sporadic cases of yellow fever, until the frightful epidemic of 1798, when Mr. Hiltzheimer lost his life.

It seems strange, as we now look back upon it, that Mrs. Lear's sudden death, late in July, 1793, did not cause more uneasiness in the Washington household. In writing of the event to Mrs. George A. Washington, the President does not mention that Mrs. Lear died of the prevailing epidemic, but simply says, under date of July 29, 1793: —

"An unfortunate event, which took place in this family yesterday, has prevented your aunt from writing to you as I expected & she intended. — namely the death of Mrs. Lear. She was seized yesterday week in a violent manner with the collick; — This brought on a high fever, which put a period to her existence between 4 & 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, to the grief of all the family as she was an amiable & inoffensive little woman." [1]

[1] It is a rather curious coincidence that this letter of the President's was written to the woman who was destined to become Mr. Lear's second wife. Mrs. George A. Washington was a widow at the time, and in August, 1795, married Mr. Lear. Upon the death of his second wife, Mr. Lear showed

Digitized by Google

Mr. and Mrs. Tobias Lear lived in the same house with the Washingtons, and were upon the most intimate terms with them. Mrs. Lear, whom Mr. Lear had known from his boyhood, was a New England girl, a daughter of Captain Long, of Portsmouth. In writing of her death to his wife, Judge Iredell says: —

"We have lately had a very affecting death in this city. Mrs. Lear, the wife of Mr. Lear, the President's secretary, died on Sunday last after a short but very severe illness. She was only 23, and beloved and respected by all who knew her, and she and her husband had been fond of one another from infancy.

"He attended the funeral himself, and so did the President and Mrs. Washington. Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Jefferson, General Knox, Judge Wilson, Judge Peters and myself were pallbearers."

Great anxiety was felt by the President's friends during the epidemic of 1793, as he could not be induced to quit his post until September, when he was finally prevailed upon to retire to Mount Vernon for a few weeks. The next summer, Washington's official duties not per-

his partiality for Mrs. Washington's family by marrying another of her nieces, a great niece this time, Fanny Henley. This lady survived her husband for many years, living until 1856, and is still well remembered by many residents of Washington City.

Digitized by Google

mitting him to make more than a flying visit to his Virginia home, a house in Germantown was taken, where he and his family remained from July until late in September.[1] This summer, Mrs. Washington wrote to her widowed niece, Mrs. George A. Washington:[2] —

"It would my dear Fanny be particularly pleasing to me to come home this summer if it was convenient the President thinks that the publick business will keep him in this place all the summer — and it would not be agreeable to me to stay at Mount Vernon without him — Mr. Pearce living in the family would make it very inconvenient, — as we should be obliged to bring servants with us we could not find room for them when the Servants Hall is occupied with a large family if I could bear the journey I should like to make you a flying visit but that you know I cannot as I am always so much fatigued after I get home for several days — that I could not think of setting out again for some time — I do not know what keys you have — it is highly necessary that the beds and bed cloths of all kinds should be aired if you have the keys I beg you will make Caroline put all the things of every kind out to air and Brush and clean all the places and rooms that they were in —

[1] This fine old mansion upon the Main Street, opposite Market Square, is still in good preservation, and is now the residence of Mr. Elliston P. Morris.

[2] From facsimile in possession of the Oneida Historical Society, Utica, N. Y.

Digitized by Google

the President has hopes of seeing Mount Vernon soon he cannot fix the time till after the Congress is up they talk of rising in the course of this week but I dont know whether it is certain or not — the Members are going off every day — the house is I believe pretty thin at this time."

From this letter it appears that Mrs. Washington kept her household well in hand, when she was away from home as well as when she was upon the premises. In another letter written to the same niece, who seems to have lived in Alexandria after her husband's death, occur some expressions which reveal the fact that the young widow had already consulted her aunt with regard to a second matrimonial alliance: [1] —

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 29, 1794.

MY DEAR FANNIE, — I am sorry to find by your letter of the 24th that your children are still complaining and hope the cool weather and change of air — if you take them up to Berkley — will perfect their cure. The weather has been uncommonly hot here which has made it very sickly in the town and neighborhood. It has several times been reported that the yellow fever is in the city — one

[1] This letter was found, during the late war, in the house of a Mr. Washington, near Winchester, Va., by Mr. Adrien Foote of Ashland, Mass., in which latter place it is still to be seen, with several other letters written by Mrs. Washington from Philadelphia. As given here it has been carefully edited.

Digitized by Google

doctor says it is in town and another says it is not — several people have died with different complaints. I hope the cool weather will carry off fevers of every kind. Sore throats among the children have been fatal in many cases. Many have died with that complaint.

The President desires me to tell you he has not been unmindful of his promise to take Fayette. He only waits 'till he is old enough to be put to a good school in this city. There are no schools but the college and that is a very indifferent one for big boys — little ones are not attended to at all, as you find by Dr. Stuart's complaint of my grandson. He attends as constant as the day comes, but he does not learn as much as he might if the master took proper care to make the children attentive to their books.

My dear Fannie, I wish I could give you unerring advice in regard to the request contained in your last letter. I really don't know what to say to you on the subject. You must be governed by your own judgment and I trust Providence will direct you for the best; it is a matter more interesting to yourself than any other. The person contemplated is a worthy man, and esteemed by everyone that is acquainted with him; he has, it is conceived, fair prospects before him; — is, I believe, very industrious, and will, I have not a doubt, make something handsome for himself — as to the President, he never has, nor never will, as you have often heard him say, intermeddle in mat-

Digitized by Google

rimonial concerns; he joins with me, however, in wishing you every happiness this world can give. You have had a long acquaintance with Mr. Lear, and must know him as well as I do. He always appeared very attentive to his wife and child, as far as ever I have seen. He is, I believe, a man of strict honor and probity and one with whom you would have as good a prospect of happiness as with any one I know, but beg you will not let anything I say influence you either way. The President has a very high opinion of, and friendship for Mr. Lear, and has not the least objection to your forming the connection, but no more than myself, would not wish to influence your judgment either way, yours and the children's good being among the first wishes of my heart.

The insurgents in the back country have carried matters so high that the President has been obliged to send a large body of men to settle the matter, and is to go himself tomorrow to Carlyle to meet the troops. God knows when he will return again. I shall be left quite alone with the children. Should you go to Berkley, be so good as to send the keys you have of our house to Mr. Pearce, in case the President should take Mount Vernon in, on his way back to this place. My love and good wishes attend you, in which the President joins me, with love to the children, also, my dear Fannie, and believe me with sincere wishes for your happiness,

Your ever affectionate,

M. WASHINGTON.

Digitized by Google

This letter was written when the President was about to set forth with the militia which had been raised to quell the formidable revolt in the western part of the state, known as the "Whiskey Rebellion." The troops, fifteen thousand in number, were placed in command of General Harry Lee, then Governor of Virginia, Washington himself accompanying them as far as Bedford.

Writing to her niece a little later, Mrs. Washington says: —

"Your happiness, my dear Fanny, is, I assure you, very dear to the President and myself. I have no doubt but you have considered well what you are about to undertake, and I hope that the same Providence that has hitherto taken care of you will still be your guardian angel to protect and direct you in all your undertakings, you have my fervent prayers for your happiness. . . . shall give Mrs. Izard a letter for you which she will send to you as soon as she gets to Alexandria. Mrs. Merrigold [Manigault] is her daughter and they will, I expect, go all together to Mount Vernon. I will, when I write next week, give you all the information I can as to the time they expect to get to Georgetown. Mr. Lear is very well acquainted with the ladies and gentlemen. If he will be so good as to let you know when they arrive at the city and go down with them it would be more agreeable to them, as he would be able to walk about with them."

Digitized by Google

In another letter, the mistress of Mount Vernon reveals her never failing hospitality and kindness, in making arrangements to have these ladies visit her home:[1]—

PHILADELPHIA October the 22nd 1794

MY DEAR FANNY, —I expect that this letter will be handed to you by Mrs. Izard — the lady that I mentioned to you in my letter of the 19th of this month, —she has a desire to see Mount Vernon — if you could make it convenient to yourself, I shall be much obliged to you to go down with the Ladys to Mount Vernon, as I wish everything thair to be made as agreable to them as possible — the notice is short, Mrs. Izard is a very agreable Lady and her family amiable, — we have been acquainted ever since I went up to New York — I should be very much gratified to hear that the Ladies of Alexandria shows the Ladies sevility — if they should be obliged to make any stay thair — you will find them all very agreeable, Miss Izard has been long a friend of Nellys — Do my dear Fanny have everything as good as you can for them, and put up any little thing that may be necessary for the children on the road — I send you a fashionable cape & Border — if you will scollop or over cast the borders it will add to their beauty — my love & good wishes attend you & the children.

I am, my dear Fanny, your ever affectionate

M. WASHINGTON.

[1] From original in possession of Mr. Ferdinand J. Dreer, of Philadelphia.

Digitized by Google

In the summer of 1796 the Washingtons entertained a number of guests at Mount Vernon, among them the Marquis de Yrujo, Minister from Spain, and young Lafayette with his tutor, M. Frestel. George Washington Lafayette came to the United States in 1795. From Boston he wrote to the President, and although for reasons of state the latter deemed it inadvisable to invite him to his house at that time, he wrote to him: "I received your letter from Boston; and, with the heart of affection I welcome you to this country." The young nobleman lived quietly in Philadelphia until the spring of 1797, when, upon Washington's retirement from office, he was received into the family at Mount Vernon like an own child, and remained with the President and Mrs. Washington until the following autumn, when, hearing of the release of his father from prison, he and his tutor parted with their American friends and sailed from New York.[1] Mrs. George A. Washington visited her aunt in Philadelphia, and another young relative whom Mrs. Washington calls Betsey Custis, as appears from the following letter:[2]—

[1] From unpublished sheets of Washington after the Revolution, by William S. Baker, of Philadelphia.

[2] From original in possession of the Oneida Historical Society.

Digitized by Google

PHILADELPHIA, April the 5th., 1795.

MY DEAR FANNY, — I was exceedingly pleased to hear by Mr. Lear that you was arrived safe at home. The roads are not so bad down the country as they are here. If they had been anything like the roads in this part of the country, it would have been very difficult for you to have got on.

I am sorry to find by your letter of the 21st of March that your brother is disappointed in his election. I see by the Richmond paper that Mr. Clopton is the representative. I am sorry to hear that Mrs. M. Bassett enjoys such bad health, and she can have very little pleasure if her life be always indisposed. They have tried the Sweet Springs — wish they would try a northern trip, as they might then be able to judge which air would be best for them. Young folks will have their own way.

I had all your things done and put on board of a vessel with several things of Mr. Peters, and am surprised that you have not got them, as Mr. Lear told me that the vessel was arrived. Your two boxes were directed to the care of Col. Gilning. I hope you have got them by this time. I was anxious to have them done by the time you came up. I hope your gowns will fit and are made as you like. There was no silk to be got nearer the colour that you mentioned, than the one sent; I thought it a very pretty one.

I am very much grieved to hear that my poor sister is in such a wretched situatiou . . . Poor dear Betty has had a hard lot in this world. I hope

Digitized by Google

her children will be a comfort to her as they grow up and not follow their unhappy Father's bad example.[1] I often think of her with the greatest concern. I should be very glad if it could so happen that she would come up to see me when I go home. She is in such distress that I fear she will never have resolution to leave her children to come so long a journey. I shall let her know when I am coming home. If she can come, your brother B. promised to let her have a man servant to bring her up. It gives me pleasure, my dear Fanny to hear that your children are well, and I think it very proper that Maria and Fayette are put to school, as they will learn much better at school than at home if the teacher is tolerably good.

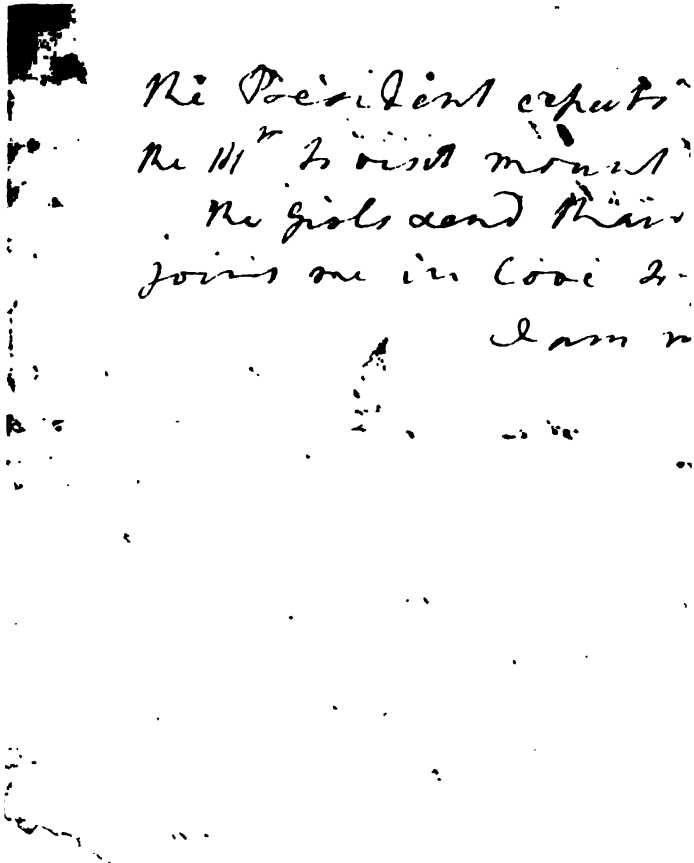
Mr. Lear arrived here on Thursday and intends to set out to-morrow to the eastward.

Betsy Custis told me she wished to stay with me and I wrote to her Mother for her permission which she readily gave. She seemed to be very grave. I was in hopes that being in the gay world would have a good effect on her, but she seems to wish to be at home and very much by herself. She takes no delight to go out to visit: she would not go with Nelly and myself to the assembly last week. She don't like to go to church every Sunday: thinks it too fatiguing. She often complains of not feeling well. She took ill when she first came here, but is much better, and looks better. The girls are to go

[1] Mrs. Washington, in her will, left money for the education of these children.

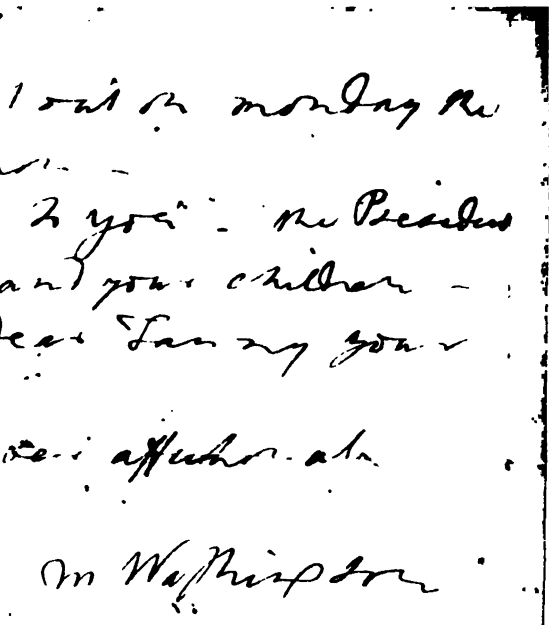
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



LAST PAGE OF A LETTER, DATED
FROM MRS. WASHINGTON TO HER

Digitized by Google



ATED PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 5th, 1795.

O HER NIECE MRS. FANNY WASHINGTON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

to Miss Morris' wedding on Thursday next. She is to be married to one of our countrymen, Mr. James Marshall.[1] Col. Humphreys has made us a short visit: he has just taken leave of us to return to Portugal again.

Thank God we are all well. The President expects to set out on Monday, the the 14th to visit Mount Vernon.

The girls send their love to you. The President joins me in love to you and your children.

I am my Dear Fanny your ever affectionate

M WASHINGTON.

Miss Chambers, like Miss Bordley, entertained a sincere admiration for Mrs. Washington. In one of her clever, gossiping letters to her mother, she says: —

"In a previous letter, I wrote of being at the President's, and my admiration of Mrs. Washington.

"Yesterday Colonel Proctor informed me that her carriage was at the door, and a servant inquiring for me. . . . After the usual compliments and some conversation she gave me a pressing invitation to spend the day with her, and so perfectly friendly were her manners, I found myself irresistibly attached to her. On taking leave, she observed a portrait of the President hanging over the fire-

[1] This was a daughter of Robert Morris, who married James Marshall, a brother of the Chief Justice.

Digitized by Google

place, and said 'She had never seen a correct likeness of General Washington. The only merit the numerous portraits of him possessed, was their resemblance to each other.'"

True as this last observation seems to be with regard to the portraits of the General, a similar criticism cannot be applied to those of Mrs. Washington, as those of Stuart, Robertson, Pine, and the three Peales, are all unlike. Mr. James Peale, a brother of Charles Willson Peale, was engaged to paint a portrait or miniature of Mrs. Washington while she was living in Philadelphia. The hour named for the first sitting was seven in the morning. Mr. Peale made his toilet with great care and stepped around to the house on Market Street; but feeling some hesitation about presenting himself at so early an hour before a lady of such distinction, he took a turn down the street and back before he could make up his mind to sound the brass knocker. When he did so the door was at once opened and the artist shown into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Washington received him with her usual kindliness and dignity; but punctuality being the rule of the house, she looked at the clock and reminded Mr. Peale that he was late. To this the artist replied that he had hesitated to disturb Mrs. Washington at so early an hour

Digitized by Google

as seven; whereupon the energetic little lady assured him that she had already attended family worship, given Miss Custis a music lesson, and read the newspaper while she was waiting for him.

Gilbert Stuart's third original portrait of Washington, destined to become one of the most famous of his works, was a bust-portrait, for which he consented to sit at the solicitation of his wife, of whom the artist painted a companion portrait during the spring and summer of 1796. Stuart's time was so constantly broken in upon by visitors that in order to secure uninterrupted hours for his work he was obliged to leave his studio on Chestnut Street. He removed to Germantown, where he fitted up a barn for a studio, in which novel *atelier* the Athenæum portraits of the President and Mrs. Washington were executed. Neither of these beautiful portraits was ever finished, and perhaps to this circumstance they owe some of their delicacy and charm. That of Washington, the artist kept in his Germantown quarters, making numerous copies from it, calling it his one hundred dollar bill, and whether with the desire of making money by it, or because he was attached to a work which was a true inspiration of genius, persistently excusing himself from giving it up, until the patience of its

Digitized by Google

owner was quite exhausted, and he finally accepted a copy in place of the original. It was while Gilbert Stuart was living in Germantown that the President and Mrs. Washington made so many visits to his studio, and "here," says Miss Jane Stuart, "he painted many of the beautiful portraits that have come down to us." Nelly Custis, Mrs. Law, Miss Harriet Chew (afterward Mrs. Carroll), generally accompanied Mrs. Washington, while General Knox, General Henry Lee, and other friends often came to the studio with the President.

Of the last birthday that the Washingtons spent in Philadelphia, Judge Iredell wrote:

"The President's birthday was celebrated here with every possible mark of attachment, affection and respect, rendered affecting beyond all expression, by its being in some degree a parting scene. Mrs. Washington was moved even to tears, with the mingled emotions of gratitude for such strong proofs of public regard, and the new prospect of the uninterrupted enjoyment of domestic life: she expressed herself something to this effect. I never saw the President look better, or in finer spirits, but his emotions were too powerful to be concealed. He could sometimes scarcely speak. Three rooms of his house were almost entirely full from 12 to 3, and such a crowd at the door it was difficult to get in. At the Amphitheatre at night it is supposed

Digitized by Google

there was at least 1200 persons. The show was a brilliant one, but such scrambling to go to supper that there was some danger of being squeezed to death. The Vice President handed in Mrs. Washington, and the President immediately followed. The applause with which they were received is indescribable. The same was shown on their return from supper. The music added greatly to the interest of the scene. The President staid till between 12 and 1."

From the numerous letters that passed between John Adams and his wife, it appears that she was very little in Philadelphia during the latter years of the administration. To the pen of the President-elect we are indebted for many glimpses of the Washingtons during the last months of their official life. In one letter he says, "The old hero looks very grave of late;" and again, when the question of his own succession to the chief magistracy was definitely settled, he wrote: —

"On Tuesday, when I waited, as usual, on Mrs. Washington, after attending the levee, she complimented me very complaisantly and affectionately on my election, and went farther, and said more than I expected. She said it gave them great pleasure to find that the votes had turned in my favor, &c. I doubted whether their prudence would have ventured so far."

Digitized by Google

From this and other accounts, it appears that Mrs. Washington was usually in her drawing-room up-stairs, during the hours of the President's levees, and there received any of his guests who desired to pay their respects to her. In all the letters of Mr. Adams written at this time there is a note of admiration and affection for this couple. In writing of his own inauguration on the fourth of March, he says: —

"A solemn scene it was indeed, and it was made more affecting to me by the presence of the Gen'l whose countenance was as serene and unclouded as the day. He seemed to me, to enjoy a triumph over me. Methought I heard him say, 'Ay! I am fairly out and you fairly in! See which of us will be happiest.' . . .

"In the chamber of the House of Representatives was a multitude as great as the space could contain; and I believe, scarcely a dry eye, but Washington's. The sight of the sun setting, full-orbed, and another rising, though less splendid, was a novelty. Chief Justice Ellsworth administered the oath, and with great energy. Judges Cushing, Wilson and Iredell were present. Many ladies."

Among these ladies was Nelly Custis. Mrs. Washington does not seem to have been present. In writing of this scene Mrs. Susan R. Echard,

Digitized by Google

an eye-witness, says that Miss Custis was so much agitated that "she could not trust herself to be near her honored grandfather." This same narrator adds: —

"There was a narrow passage from the door of entrance to the room, which was on the east, dividing the rows of benches. General Washington stopped at the end to let Mr. Adams pass to the chair. The latter always wore a full suit of bright drab with lash or loose cuffs to his coat. He always wore wrist ruffles. He had not changed his fashions. He was a short man with a good head. . . .

"General Washington's dress was a full suit of black. His military hat had a black cockade.

"There was no cheering, no noise; the most profound silence greeted him, as if the great assembly desired to hear him breathe, and catch his breath in homage of their hearts. Mr. Adams covered his face with both his hands; the sleeves of his coat, and his hands were covered with tears. Every now and then there was a suppressed sob. I cannot describe Washington's appearance as I felt it — perfectly composed and self-possessed till the end of his address: Then, when strong nervous sobs broke loose, when tears covered the faces, then the great man was shaken. I never took my eyes from his face. Large drops came from his eyes."

The day before his retirement from public life, a large dinner was given by the President.

Digitized by Google

The foreign ministers and their wives, Mr. Adams, Mr. Jefferson, and many other distinguished persons were present. Bishop White, who was one of the company, has left the following touching description of the scene: —

"During the dinner much hilarity prevailed; but on the removal of the cloth it was put an end to by the President: certainly without design. Having filled his glass, he addressed the company, with a smile on his countenance, as nearly as can be recollected in the following terms: 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is the last time I shall drink your health as a public man. I do it with sincerity, and wishing you all possible happiness.' There was an end of all pleasantry. He who gives this relation accidentally directed his eye to the lady of the British minister (Mrs. Liston) and tears were running down her cheeks."

On the eighth, the ex-President called to make his farewell visit upon Mr. Adams, and to leave his own and Mrs. Washington's respects for Mrs. Adams. The next day the General and Mrs. Washington, accompanied by Miss Custis, young Lafayette and his tutor, set forth for Mount Vernon. In Baltimore they were received with enthusiastic demonstrations, and met, says one of the journals of the day, by "as great a concourse of people

Digitized by Google

as Baltimore ever witnessed," including a detachment of Captain Hollingsworth's troop, which escorted the distinguished visitors to their stopping-place, the Fountain Inn, amid "reiterated and thundering huzzas from the spectators."

A few days later Miss Custis wrote to her friend, Mrs. Oliver Wolcott: —

"We arrived here on Wednesday without any accident after a tedious journey of seven days. Grandpapa is very well and much pleased with being once more Farmer Washington."

Digitized by Google

XI

LAST DAYS AT MOUNT VERNON

"I CANNOT tell you, my dear friend," wrote Mrs. Washington to Mrs. Knox soon after her return to Mount Vernon, "how much I enjoy *home* after having been deprived of one so long, for our dwelling in New York and Philadelphia was not *home*, only a sojourning. The General and I feel like children just released from school or from a hard taskmaster, and we believe that nothing can tempt us to leave the sacred roof tree again, except on private business or pleasure. We are so penurious with our enjoyment that we are loath to share it with any one but dear friends, yet almost every day some stranger claims a portion of it, and we cannot refuse. Nelly and I are companions. Washington [G. W. P. Custis] is yet at Princeton and doing well. Mrs. Law and Mrs. Peter are often with us, and my dear niece Fanny Washington, who is a widdow, lives at Alexandria only a few miles from

Digitized by Google

us.[1] Our furniture and other things sent us from Philadelphia arrived safely, our plate we brought with us in the carriage. How many dear friends I have left behind! They fill my memory with sweet thoughts. Shall I ever see them again? Not likely unless they shall come to me here, for the twilight is gathering around our lives. I am again fairly settled down to the pleasant duties of an old-fashioned Virginia house-keeper, steady as a clock, busy as a bee, and cheerful as a cricket."

This letter was evidently dictated by Mrs. Washington, or written for her by her husband, as were most of her letters at this time. Writing seems to have become more and more of a burden to her, and the General, whose pen never rested, often relieved his wife of this task, even in her correspondence with intimate friends.

Many repairs were necessary at Mount Vernon after the eight years' absence of its master and mistress. Washington wrote to Dr. James McHenry, "I have scarcely a room to put a friend into, or to sit in myself, without the music of hammers, or the odoriferous scent of paint." A little later he wrote to his

[1] It is a rather curious circumstance that Mrs. Washington should speak of her niece Fanny as "a widdow," when she had been for several years the wife of Mr. Lear.

Digitized by Google

adopted son, then at college, "Your mamma went from here (with your sister Nelly) to Hope Park on Wednesday and is as well as usual. Your sister Law and child, were well on that day; and Mr., Mrs. and Eleanor Peter are all well at this place now, and many others in the house, among whom are Mr. Volney and Mr. William Morris." Other guests who visited Mount Vernon about this time were General Spotswood and his wife; Mr. Thomas Adams, a son of the President; the British minister and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Liston; Charles Carroll, Jr., of Carrollton; and Mr. Benjamin Latrobe. The latter visitor, a friend of Judge Bushrod Washington's, gives an interesting picture of Mrs. Washington as she then appeared. He says that after the General had conversed most agreeably with him for two hours, he strolled about the lawn, took a few sketches of the house, and upon his return to it found Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis in the hall.

"I introduced myself to Mrs. Washington, as the friend of her nephew, and she immediately entered into conversation upon the prospect from the lawn, and presently gave me an account of her family, in a good-humored free manner, that was extremely pleasing and flattering. She retains strong remains of considerable beauty, and seems

Digitized by Google

to enjoy good health and as good humour. She has no affectation of superiority, but acts completely in the character of the mistress of the house of a respectable and opulent country gentleman. His grand-daughter, Miss Eleanor Custis, has more perfection of form, of expression, of colour, of softness, and of firmness of mind, than I have ever seen before.

"Young La Fayette, with his tutor, came down some time before dinner. He is a young man of seventeen years of age, of a mild, pleasant countenance, making a favourable impression at first sight.

"Dinner was served up about half-past three. It had been postponed half an hour in hopes of Mr. Lear's arrival from Alexandria. The president came into the portico a short time before three, and talked freely upon common topics with the family. At dinner he placed me at the left hand of Mrs. Washington, Miss Custis sat at her right, and himself next to her. There was very little conversation at dinner. A few jokes passed between the president and young La Fayette, whom he treated more as a child than as a guest. I felt a little embarrassed at the silent reserved air that prevailed. As I drink no wine, and the president drank but three glasses, the party before long returned to the portico. Mr. Lear, Mr. Dandridge, and Mr. Lear's three boys soon after arrived, and helped out the conversation. The president retired in about three quarters of an

Digitized by Google

hour. As much as I wished to stay, I thought it a point of delicacy to take up as little time of the president as possible, and I therefore ordered my horses to the door. I waited a few minutes till the president returned. He asked me whether I had any very pressing business to prevent my lengthening my visit. I told him I had not, but that as I considered it an intrusion upon his more important engagements, I thought I could reach Colchester that evening by daylight. 'Sir,' said he, 'you see I take my own way. If you can be content to take yours at my house, I shall be glad to see you here longer.' "

This very frank invitation was evidently accepted in the spirit in which it was extended, as Mr. Latrobe records later that he spent the night at Mount Vernon.

During the winter of 1797 and 1798, which was a very severe one, the General and Mrs. Washington sometimes drove to Alexandria to dine with such old friends as Dr. Craik and the Fitzhughs.

On the twenty-second of February the whole family attended a ball in Alexandria in honor of the General's birthday. In reply to an invitation from the managers of the dancing assembly of that town, received more than a year later, the General expressed his own and Mrs. Washington's thanks in the most

Digitized by Google

courteous terms, couching their regrets in the following paragraph: "But alas! our dancing days are no more. We wish, however, for all those who have a relish for so innocent and agreeable an amusement all the pleasure the season will afford them."

The spring after their return to Mount Vernon, the Washingtons set forth upon an eight days' sojourn in the federal city, where they were the guests of Mr. Thomas Peter and Mr. Law, and on their return stopped at Mount Eagle to take leave of their old friend, the Rev. Bryan Fairfax, who was about to sail for England. By the hands of this messenger the following letter was sent from Mrs. Washington to her old friend and neighbor, Mrs. George William Fairfax, of Belvoir, who had been living abroad for many years:[1]—

"Whether you are indebted to me, or I to you, a letter, I shall not (because it would not comport with that friendship I have always professed, and still feel for you to enquire;) but I shall proceed having so good an opportunity as is afforded by Mr. Fairfax's voyage to England, to assure you that although many years have elapsed since I have either received or written one to you, that my affectionate regard for you has undergone no diminution, and that it is among my greatest

[1] The draft of this letter is in the General's handwriting.

Digitized by Google

regrets, now I am again fixed (I hope for life) at this place, at not having you as a neighbor and companion.

"This loss was not sensibly felt by me while I was a kind of perambulator, during eight or nine years of the war, and during other eight years which I resided at the seat of the general government, occupied in scenes more busy, tho' not more happy, than in the tranquil employment of rural life with which my days will close.

"The changes which have taken place in this country, since you left it (and it is pretty much the case in all other parts of this State) are, in one word, total. In Alexandria, I do not believe there lives at this day a single family with whom you had the smallest acquaintance. In our neighborhood Colo. Mason, Colo. Mc.Carty and wife, Mr. Chichestor, Mr. Lund Washington and all the Wageners, have left the stage of human life; and our visitors on the Maryland side are gone and going likewise."

The twilight was gathering around this couple, as Mrs. Washington had said in her letter to Mrs. Knox; but it was a twilight that fell softly, and was lightened by many memories of a happy, well-spent life, and numerous marks of affection from friends at home and abroad. A letter from Mrs. Washington at Mount Vernon, to Mrs. Samuel Powel in Philadelphia, shows that her inter-

Digitized by Google

est in her old friends in that city had not changed amid the quieter surroundings of her home: —

"It is unnecessary, I pursuade myself to assure you, that with whatsoever pleasure your letters may be received, the satisfaction to be derived from them will fall short of *that* which your company would give: — but as stern winter (which has commenced with uncommon severity) has closed all expectation of the latter, I can only offer my thanks for your kind remembrance of us in your letter of the 24th of November, while I add as our hopes, that when all things will be blooming here, in the Spring, except the withering Proprietors of the Mansion, that you will carry into effect the long promised visit to this retreat; and make it your headquarters during your stay in Virg[a]. . . .

"Poor Mrs. Morris! I feel much for her situation; and earnestly pray that Mr. Morris may, soon work through all his difficulties; in which I am pursuaded, that all who know him heartily join me; as they do that their ease, quiet and domestic enjoyments, may be perfectly restored. Mrs. Marshall's arrival must be a comfort to them all. However disappointed she herself may be, in the apparent reverse of their situation, since she embarked for Europe. — We hear with concern too, of the declining state of Mrs. White's health; and to her, Mrs. Morris, and the rest of our Phila-

Digitized by Google

delphia acquaintances, we would thank you, when occasions offer, to present our best and sincerest regards.

"Mrs. Fitzhugh and family, have within the last fortnight, become residents of Alex$^{a}_{n}$ — and we should have made them 'ere this a congratulatory visit on the occasion, but the bad weather in which they travelled, has indisposed Mrs. Fitzhugh so much, as to confine her to her room with an inflamation, more troublesome than dangerous.

"I am now, by desire of the General, to add a few words on his behalf; which he desires may be expressed in the terms following; that is to say, — that despairing of hearing what may be said of him, if he shall really go off in an apoplectic, or any other fit, (for he thinks all fits that issue in death are worse than a love fit, a fit of laughter, and many other kinds which he could name) — he is glad to hear *beforehand* what will be said of him on that occasion, conceiving that nothing extra will happen between *this* and *then*, to make a change in his character for better, or for worse, — and besides as he has entered into an engagement with Mr. Morris, and several other Gentlemen, not to quit the theatre of *this* world before the year 1800, it may be *relied upon* that no breach of contract shall be laid to him on that account, unless dire necessity should bring it about, maugre all his exertions to the contrary.— In that case, he shall hope that they will do by

Digitized by Google

him as he would do by them, — excuse it. At present there seems to be no danger of his giving them the slip, as neither his health, nor spirits, were ever in greater flow, notwithstanding he adds, he is descending, and has almost reached the bottom of the hill; — in other words, the shades below."[1]

Much youthful gayety and interest was brought into the home life of Mount Vernon by the presence there of Nelly Custis and the many friends and admirers whom she drew around her. The delicate, high-bred beauty which distinguished this favorite granddaughter of Mrs. Washington's appears in a portrait by Stuart, while those who knew her in later years speak of her as a woman of a rare and noble type.

Soon after her return to her Virginia home, Miss Custis wrote to her friend, Mrs Oliver Wolcott, in Philadelphia:[2] —

"We have spent our Summer and Autumn very happily here, have in general been blessed with health — have had many very agreeable visitors

[1] This letter, which was placed at the disposal of the author through the courtesy of Mr. Charles H. Hart of Philadelphia, is in General Washington's handwriting. For the facetious ending, it may be unnecessary to state that the husband and not the wife was responsible.

[2] From original in the Emmet Collection at the Lenox Library, New York.

Digitized by Google

and are now contentedly seated round our winter fireside, often speaking of and wishing to see again our good friends in Philadelphia, but never regretting its amusements, or a life of ceremony.

"I stay very much at home, have not been to the City for two or three months.

"My Grandparents, Brother, a nephew of the General's and *your humble servant* compose the family at present, I never have a dull or lonesome hour, never find a day too long, indeed time appears to fly, and I sometimes think the years are much shorter for sometime past than they ever were before.

"My Beloved Grandmama joins me in love and best wishes to you and your children, with all our compliments to Mr. Wolcott, etc."

Reading this girlish letter, we fall to wondering whether the nephew at Mount Vernon, at this time, was the future husband of Miss Custis, and whether the shortness of her days may be accounted for by the fact that the pleasant little pastoral had already begun, which was to brighten the General's last years by adding another link to the chain which connected his own family with that of his wife.

Nelly Custis was now eighteen, had attended her first ball in Georgetown, and had received a long, serious letter from her adopted father

Digitized by Google

upon the proper management of the tender passion, of which advice she stood in great need, if we may believe all the tales that have come down to us of the many suitors that her beauty and charm attracted to Mount Vernon. Among these was young Charles Carroll, and although Washington Custis wrote of the rumored engagement of his sister to Mr. Carroll as a most desirable one, the General had other views for his adopted daughter, in which she concurred. In writing to Washington Custis, the General said: —

"Young Mr. C——. came here about a fortnight ago to dinner, and left the next morning after breakfast. If his object was such as you say has been reported, it was not declared here; and therefore the less said upon the subject, particularly by your sister's friends, the more prudent it will be until the subject develops itself more."

To Governor Trumbull, Washington wrote early in February, 1799: —

"Mrs. Washington is as well as usual & Nelly Custis, who on my birthday, (the 22nd instant) will change her name for that of Lewis, a nephew of mine and brother to those who lived with me in New York & Philadelphia."

The simple record in the General's diary under the date of his last birthday is: —

Digitized by Google

"The Rev^{d} Mr. Davis & Mr. George Calvert came to dinner & Miss Custis was married about Candle light to Mr. Law^{r} Lewis."

Although Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis had a place called Woodlawn, a part of the Mount Vernon estate, they spent much of their time at the Mansion House, and here their first child was born, a short time before the General's death.

Strangers who came to Mount Vernon in these days were impressed by the busy activity of Mrs. Washington's life, and her kindness and constant thought for others. Mrs. Edward Carrington, a daughter of the fascinating "Belinda" of Thomas Jefferson's early letters, visited the Washingtons with her husband in November, 1799, and in a letter to her sister, Mrs. Daniel Call, has left a pleasant picture of this couple as they appeared in the last weeks of their happy life together.

In her letter, written from Mount Vernon, Mrs. Carrington says:—

"We arrived here on the 20th just time enough for dinner after a pleasant journey. . . . Yes, we arrived at this venerable mansion in perfect safety, where we are experiencing every mark of hospitality and kindness, that the good General's continued friendship to Col. Carrington could lead us to ex-

Digitized by Google

pect: — his reception of my husband, was that of a Brother; he took us each by the hand with a warmth of expression not to be described, pressed mine and told me that I conferred a favor, never to be forgotten, in bringing his old friend to see him. Then bidding a servant to call the ladies entertained us most facetiously till they appeared. . . .

"Then we repaired to the Old Lady's room which is precisely on the style of our good old Aunt; that is to say nicely fixed for all sorts of work— On one side sits the chamber-maid with her knitting— on the other a little colored pet learning to sew, an old decent woman, with her table of shears cutting out the negroes winter clothes, while the good old lady directs them all; incessantly knitting herself and pointing out to me several pair of nice colored stockings and gloves she had just finished, and presenting me with a pair half done which she begs I will finish and wear for her sake. Her netting too is a great source of amusement and is so neatly done that all the younger part of the family are proud of trimming their dresses with it, and have furnished me with a whole suit so that I shall appear 'a la domestique' at the first party we have when I get home."

There were guests at Mount Vernon on Wednesday, December 11th, although it rained some part of the day, according to the General's diary. Lord Fairfax, his son Thomas and his daughter, Mr. John Herbert, and Mrs. Warner

Digitized by Google

Washington and her son, all dined with the Washingtons and returned home after dinner. The next day there were snow, hail, and rain, yet the General rode over his farms as usual from ten o'clock until three. When mail time came, he considered the weather too bad to send a servant to the post, although he had been out, himself, all morning. Mr. Lear said: —

"I observed to him that I was afraid he had got wet; he said no, his great-coat had kept him dry. But his neck appeared to be wet, the snow was hanging on his hair. He came to dinner without changing his dress. In the evening he appeared as well as usual. A heavy fall of snow took place on Friday, which prevented the General from riding out as usual. He had taken cold, undoubtedly from being so much exposed the day before, and complained of having a sore throat; he had a hoarseness which increased in the evening, but he made light of it, as he would never take anything to carry off a cold, always observing, 'Let it go as it came.' In the evening, the papers having come from the post-office, he sat in the room with Mrs. Washington and myself reading them till about 9 o'clock, and when he met with anything which he thought diverting or interesting he would read it aloud. . . . On his retiring to bed he appeared to be in perfect health, except the cold, which he considered as trifling; he had been remarkably cheerful all the evening.

Digitized by Google

"About 2 or 3 o'clock on Saturday morning he awoke Mrs. Washington and informed her he was very unwell and had an ague. She observed that he could scarcely speak and breathed with difficulty, and she wished to get up and call a servant, but the General would not permit her lest she should take cold. As soon as the day appeared the woman, Caroline, went into the room to make a fire, and the girl desired that Mr. Rawlins, one of the overseers, who was used to bleeding the people, might be sent for to bleed him before the doctor could arrive."

The doctors came and remedies were used, with all too much blood-letting, to which Mrs. Washington objected. The labored breathing became more difficult as the day advanced. The General desired his wife to come to his bedside, and asked her to bring to him two wills that were in his desk. A little later he said: "I feel myself going — you had better not take any more trouble about me, but let me go off quietly; I cannot last long." To Dr. Craik, his valued friend and companion in arms, as well as his physician, Washington said: "Doctor, I die hard, but I am not afraid to go; I believed from my first attack I should not survive it; my breath cannot last long."

The doctor pressed his hand, but could not utter a word; he retired from the bedside and sat by the fire, absorbed in grief.

Digitized by Google

This was about eight o'clock on Saturday evening; a little after ten those around the bedside felt that the end had come. Mr. Lear says, "While we were fixed in silent grief, Mrs. Washington (who was sitting at the foot of the bed) asked with a firm and collected voice, 'Is he gone?' I could not speak, but held up my hand as a signal that he was no more. 'T is well,' said she, in the same voice, 'All is now over. I shall soon follow him. I have no more trials to pass through.'"

In writing to a friend, soon after General Washington's death, Mr. Lear said, "Mrs. Washington bore the afflicting stroke with a pious resignation and fortitude which shew that her hopes were placed beyond this life." Nothing else can explain the courage and calmness of this sorrowing woman in these dark hours. To Governor Trumbull, who had been a warm friend of her husband, she wrote in answer to his letter of condolence: —

"For myself, I have only to bow with humble submission to the will of that God who giveth and who taketh away, looking forward with faith and hope to the moment when I shall be again united with the partner of my life. But, while I continue on earth, my prayers will be offered up for the welfare and happiness of my friends, among whom you will always be numbered."

Digitized by Google

To those who visit Mount Vernon to-day, a little attic room is shown, where Mrs. Washington spent most of her time after the General's death. Here she slept, and here, by a window which commanded a view of her husband's temporary resting-place upon the lawn, she sat day after day, with her work in her hands, looking out upon the beautiful river he had loved so well, thinking of him who was laid in the soil of Mount Vernon that was so dear to him, while she waited in peace and hope her own summons to join him who had filled the round completeness of earth for her.

When it was proposed by the government to remove the remains of General Washington from the grave upon the brow of the hill, where they had first been placed, to a tomb to be prepared for them in the city of Washington, with the resolves of Congress a letter was sent to Mrs. Washington requesting her permission to make the removal. To this official communication she made the following characteristic reply:[1] —

[1] This removal was never made, and the remains of Washington lie beside those of his wife in the new vault at Mount Vernon, which was built according to his own directions at the foot of what is called the Vineyard Enclosure.

Digitized by Google

MOUNT VERNON, December 31st, 1799.[1]

Sir While I feel with keenest anguish
the late Disposition of Divine Providence, I
cannot be insensible to the mournful tributes
of respect and veneration which are paid to
the memory of my dear deceased Husband — and
as his best services and most anxious wishes
were always devoted to the welfare and happiness
of his country — to know that they were truly
appreciated and gratefully remembered affords
no inconsiderable consolation.

Taught by the great example which
I have so long before me never to oppose my
private wishes to the public will — I must
consent to the request made by congress —
which you have had the goodness to transmit
to me — and in doing this I need not — I
cannot say what a sacrifice of individual
feeling I make to a sense of public duty.

With grateful acknowledgment
and unfeigned thanks for the personal
respect and evidences of condolence expres
sed by congress, and your self.

I remain, very respectfully
sir,
Your most obedient & humble
servant
MARTHA WASHINGTON.

[1] The original letter is in possession of the United States government. This letter lay for more than ninety years hidden among some musty archives at the Capitol, and was

Digitized by Google

The two years of life that remained to Martha Washington were passed at Mount Vernon, which had been the scene of the chief joys and sorrows of her eventful career. Here, surrounded by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she passed her days in quietness, cheerful in her sorrow and loneliness as she had been through all the varied scenes of her life, receiving with unfailing courtesy and hospitality those who came to express their sympathy for her, or to do honor to the memory of her husband. One interesting picture of Mrs. Washington in her widowhood has come to us from the pen of the Rev. Manasseh Cutler, who visited her about two years after the General's death: —

"On Friday last, Messrs. Hillhouse, Davenport, J. C. Smith, Mattoon, Perkins, Tallmadge, and Goddard, and myself, made a visit to Mount Vernon to pay our respects to Mrs. Washington. We were received in the most polite and Cordial manner, and handsomely entertained . . . When our coaches entered the yard, a number of servants immediately attended, and when we had all stepped out of our Carriages, a servant conducted us to Madam Washington's room, where we were intro-

lately discovered by Walter H. French, Clerk of the Department of Files, House of Representatives. The spelling, punctuation, and breaks of lines are carefully reproduced.

Digitized by Google

duced by Mr. Hillhouse, and received in a very cordial and obliging manner. Mrs. Washington was sitting in rather a small room, with three ladies (granddaughters), one of whom is married to a Mr. Lewis, and has two fine children; the other two are single.[1] Mrs. Washington appears much older than when I saw her last at Philadelphia, but her countenance very little wrinkled and remarkably fair for a person of her years. She conversed with great ease and familiarity, and appeared as much rejoiced at receiving our visit as if we had been of her nearest connections. She regretted that we had not arrived sooner, for she always breakfasted at seven, but our breakfast would be ready in a few minutes. In a short time she rose, and desired us to walk into another room, where a table was elegantly spread with ham, cold corn beef, cold fowl, red herring and cold mutton, the dishes ornamented with sprigs of parsley and other vegetables from the garden.

"At the head of the table was the tea and coffee equipage, where she seated herself, and sent the tea and coffee to the company. We were all Federalists, which evidently gave her particular pleasure. Her remarks were frequently pointed and sometimes very sarcastic, on the new order of things, and the present administration. . . . She appeared in good health, but like one who has sus-

[1] These two ladies were either nieces of Mrs. Washington, or the younger daughters of Dr. David Stuart, as her own granddaughters were all married.

Digitized by Google

tained a loss that will always remain fresh in her mind. She spoke of the General with great affection, and observed that, though she had many favors and mercies, for which she desired to bless God, she felt as if she was become a stranger among her friends, and could welcome the time when she should be called to follow her deceased friend."

A few months later, in May, 1802, the newspapers all over the country announced the death of the widow of Washington, and the nation realized that the last living link was severed that had bound it to the family of the great General. Little is known of the closing scenes of Martha Washington's life. A "Communication" to an Alexandria journal gives the following details: —

"On Saturday the 22d of May, at 12 o'clock, P. M. Mrs. Washington terminated her well spent life. Composure and resignation were uniformly displayed during seventeen day's depredations of a severe fever. From the commencement she declared that she was undergoing the final trial, and had long been prepared for her dissolution. She took the sacrament from Mr. Davis, imparted her last advice and benedictions to her weeping relations, and sent for a white gown, which she had previously laid by for her last dress — thus in the closing scene, as in all the preceding ones, noth-

Digitized by Google

ing was omitted. The conjugal, maternal and domestic duties had all been fulfilled in an exemplary manner. She was the worthy partner of the worthiest of men, and those who witnessed their conduct could not determine which excelled in their different characters, both were so well sustained on every occasion. They lived an honor and a pattern to their country, and are taken from us to receive the rewards — promised to the faithful and just."

The following notice, which was quoted in several other journals, appeared in the "Washington Federalist": —

"Died, at Mount Vernon, on Saturday evening, the 22d ultimo, Mrs Martha Washington, widow of the late illustrious General George Washington. To those amiable and Christian virtues, which adorn the female character, she added dignity of manners, superiority of understanding, a mind intelligent and elevated. The silence of respectful grief is our best eulogy."

If, as has been said, the best of any good life escapes record, — its fragrance and beauty and song, its joy and its pathos being too evanescent for memorial, — it is doubly true of one whose noblest thoughts and deeds have been given to the sacred enclosure of her own home, of one who, like Martha Washington, although by the force of circumstances living much in public life, always held herself, in a certain measure,

Digitized by Google

apart from it. A woman not wise or great in any shining worldly sense was she; but largely endowed with those qualities of the heart that conspire to the making of a noble and rounded character, — charity, kindness, unselfishness, and sincerity. A devoted and sympathetic wife, a tender mother, a loyal friend, an earnest and devout Christian, — she was a woman well worthy to be the chosen companion and much loved wife of the greatest of our soldiers and the purest of our patriots.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INDEX

ADAMS, John, describes an Indian dinner, 98; marriage of daughter, 154; Vice-President, 202, 210; describes dinners at the Washingtons', 235, 236; speaks of Mrs. Washington's granddaughters, 242; Mrs. Washington compliments, on election, 259; emotion shown upon retirement of Washington, 260; inauguration of, 260, 261; called upon by Washington, 262.

Adams, Mrs. John, patriotism of, 83; cleverness of, 99, 101, 102; describes Richmond Hill, 202; regrets leaving New York, 218, 219; at Bush Hill, 226; describes society in Philadelphia, 227, 238; mentioned, 205, 210, 215, 262.

Adams, Samuel, objects to giving ball for Mrs. Washington, 93.

Adams, Thomas, son of President Adams, 266.

Andros, Sir Edmund, Governor of Virginia, 18.

Arlington, on eastern shore of Virginia, 16, 29.

Armstrong, Colonel, 66.

BACHE, Mrs. Richard (Sarah Franklin), goes into society with the Washingtons, 45, 46, 128; presides over relief association for soldiers, 136, 137.

Bassett, Colonel Burwell, visits Mount Vernon, 55, 56, 63; Mrs. Washington at house of, in New Kent, 89, 91; daughter Fanny marries G. A. Washington, 162; mentioned, 57, 104.

Bassett, Fanny, marriage of, 162, 169 (see Mrs. G. A. Washington).

Bassett, Mrs. Burwell, sister of Mrs. Washington, 48; letters from Mrs. Washington to, 55, 56, 102, 103, 104, 147, 148; visits Mount Vernon, 63.

Bassett, Mrs. M., 253.

Baylies, Henry, 151.

Beekman, Mrs. James, leading belle of New York, 215.

Digitized by Google

Berkeley, William, Governor of Virginia, 1, 2, 3.
Biddle, Colonel Clement, friend of Washington's, 223.
Biddle, Mrs. Clement, spends winter at Valley Forge, 121, 223.
Biddle, Rebecca, 224 (see Mrs. Nathaniel Chapman).
Bingham, Captain, escorts Mrs. Washington into Philadelphia, 190.
Bingham, Mrs. William, sets fashions for Philadelphia women, 216, 226, 227, 238, 239.
Binney, Susan, lives opposite to General Washington in Philadelphia, 223, 224, 238; attends Mrs. Washington's drawing-room, 228.
Birmingham Manor, 186.
Blackburn, Colonel Thomas, 177.
Blair, Dr., of William and Mary, 18.
Blair, Mrs., rudeness of Colonel Custis to, 18.
Bland, Mrs. Theodorick, at headquarters in Morristown, 112, 115.
Bordley, Elizabeth, friendship for Nelly Custis, 224; verses of, 241; great admiration for the Washingtons, 242, 243, 255.
Botetourt, Lord, Governor of Virginia, 9, 11, 71.
Boucher, Dr. Jonathan, tutor of John Custis, 54, 73.
Boudinot, Elias, at Basking Ridge, 113; at Valley Forge, 125; letter from General Washington to, 148.
Boudinot, Susan, anecdote of, 113, 114.
Bradbury, Theophilus, describes state dinner at the President's, 233, 234.
Braddock, General Edward, bequeaths horse to Washington, 33; expedition of, 36.
Bradford, William, marries Susan Boudinot, 113.
Brand-Hollis, Thomas, letter from Mrs. Adams to, 202.
Breck, Mr. Samuel, 237.
Bréhan, Madame de, and son, visit the Washingtons, 180; paints miniature of General Washington, 180; fondness of, for the simplicity of the Washingtons' life, 180, 181.
Brinton, John H., M. D., 48.
Brinton, Sarah, 48.
Brown, Alexander, 49.
Brown, Prof. W. G., opinion about portrait of Mrs. Washington, 31.
Bruton Church, Williamsburg, Virginia, 3, 9, 10, 17, 24.
Budd, Madame, of Morristown, 116.
Bunker's Hotel, site of, 193.
Burge, Sarah Coates, marries William Rawle, 239, 240.
Burwell, Rebecca, 10, 11.
Byrd, Colonel William, of Westover, settles boundary line of Virginia, 4; in Williamsburg, 11; marries Lucy Parke, 19; desires daughter to marry Daniel Parke Custis, 21.

Digitized by Google

Byrd, Evelyn, a Virginia beauty, 11; portrait at Brandon, Virginia, 21.

CADWALADER, General John, visits Mount Vernon, 171.
Cadwalader, Mrs., 230.
Call, Mrs. Daniel, letter to, 276, 277.
Calvert, Benedict, of Mount Airy, Maryland, 73, 74.
Calvert, Eleanor, 73, 74 (see Mrs. John P. Custis).
Calvert, George, first Lord Baltimore, 73.
Calvert, George, present at marriage of Nelly Custis, 276.
Carrington, Colonel Edward, visits Mount Vernon, 276.
Carrington, Mrs. Edward, describes visit to Mount Vernon, 276, 277.
Carroll, Charles, Baltimore residence of, 188.
Carroll, Jr., Charles, visits Mount Vernon, 164, 266; admires Nelly Custis, 275.
Carroll, Mrs. Charles, preparations of, to receive Mrs. Washington, 188.
Carter, Colonel, dines with the Washingtons, 177.
Cary, Mary, early love of Washington's, 38; letters to, 39–42.
Cary, Sally, 37 (see Mrs. G. W. Fairfax).
Cary, Wilson Miles, 4.
Chamberlayne, Major, 26, 28, 33.
Chambers, Benjamin, founder of Chambersburg, 227.
Chambers, Charlotte, describes drawing-room in Philadelphia, 227, 228; birthnight ball, 230, 231, 255.
Chambers, General James, 227.
Chapman, Mrs. Nathaniel, recollections of General Washington, 223, 224.
Chase, Samuel, of Maryland, 171.
Chastellux, FrançoisJean, Marquis de, General Washington writes to, 86, 154; describes Mrs. Washington, 137; at Mount Vernon, 138; visits headquarters at Newburgh, 144, 145.
Chew, Benjamin, Philadelphia house of, occupied by the Washingtons, 140.
Chew, Miss Harriet, marries Charles Carroll, Jr., 258.
Chew, Peggy, marriage of, 175, 176.
Christ Church, Alexandria, Washington vestryman in, 67.
Christ Church, Philadelphia, President attends, 232.
Clinton, Cornelia, married Citizen Genet, 215.
Clinton, George, Governor, attends entertainment at West Point, 146, 148; mentioned, 103, 193, 210.
Clinton, Mrs. George, at West Point, 146, 148; calls upon Mrs. Washington in New York, 199, 215.
Cochran, Mrs. John, at Morristown, 135, 136.
Coffin, Martha, friend of Nelly Custis, 241.
Colden, Maria, opens ball with General Washington, 146.

Digitized by Google

Colfax, Captain William, great favorite of Mrs. Washington's, 132, 136.
Colles, Julia Keese, writes of sewing-societies in Morristown, 118.
Condict, Mrs., helps soldiers, 118.
Conway, Captain Richard, loans money to Washington, 186.
Cornwallis, Lord, surrender of, 138, 140, 141.
Cox, Colonel John, assistant quartermaster to General Greene, 118; makes cannon at Batisto, 119.
Cox, Mrs. John, visited by Mrs. Washington, 118.
Craigie, Dr. Andrew, builds house in Cambridge, 96.
Craik, Dr. James, attends John Custis, 139; personal friend of Washington's, 268; attends Washington in his last illness, 279.
Craik, Miss Nancy, dines at Mount Vernon, 180.
Cushing, Judge William, 260.
Custis, Betsey, visits Mrs. Washington in Philadelphia, 152, 154.
Custis, Colonel John, singular epitaph of, 17; eccentric gentleman, 18; love letter of, 19; marries Frances Parke, 19, 20; opposes marriage of son to Miss Dandridge, 20, 21; consents to marriage, 22, 23.
Custis, Daniel Parke, marries Martha Dandridge, 11, 22, 23; ancestry, 16–20; father of, objects to marriage, 20, 21; children of, 24; death of, 24, 25; estate of, 25, 50.
Custis, Eleanor Parke (Nelly Custis), adopted by the Washingtons, 139; the child of Mount Vernon, 161; did not stand in awe of Washington, 163; beauty of, 180, 273, 275; accompanies Mrs. Washington to New York, 183; in Philadelphia, 224, 242, 254, 257, 258; friends of, 241–243; at inauguration of Mr. Adams, 260, 261; returns to Mount Vernon, 262–264; letters to Mrs. Wolcott, 263, 273, 274; described by Mr. Latrobe, 266, 267; Stuart's portrait of, 273; marries Lawrence Lewis, 275, 276, 284; home at Woodlawn, 276.
Custis, Elizabeth, granddaughter of Mrs. Washington's, 119; much at Mount Vernon, 119, 161, 183, 264, 266; marries Mr. Law, 222, 242, 258; Stuart's beautiful portrait of, 242.
Custis, Frances Parke, beautiful and eccentric, 17; marries Colonel Custis, 18–20; buried at Bruton church, 24.
Custis, G. W. P., grandson of Mrs. Washington, 29; quoted with regard to Woolaston portrait of Mrs. Washington, 31, 32; relates anecdotes of courtship and wedding of Mrs. Washington, 34, 45, 47; Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington by, 86, 138; adopted by the Washingtons, 139, 161; accompanies Mrs. Washington to New York, 183; at Prince-

Digitized by Google

ton College, 264; desires his sister to marry Mr. Carroll, 275.
Custis, John, in Bacon's Rebellion, 16.
Custis, John, of Rotterdam, 16.
Custis, John Parke, son of Mrs. Washington, 24, 53, 64; portrait by Woolaston, 32; inoculated for small-pox, 54; London orders for, 59, 60; characteristics, 72; courtship, 73, 74; marriage, 77, 78; lives at Abingdon, 79, 107, 108, 124; accompanies his mother to Cambridge, 91; at headquarters, Craigie House, 100, 103; daughter Elizabeth born, 105; aide-de-camp to Washington, 138; death of, 138, 139; children adopted by Washington, 139.
Custis, Mrs. John Parke, beauty and charm, 73, 97, 100; marriage, 77; Mrs. Washington's letter to, 78; lives at Abingdon, 79, 107, 108; accompanies Mrs. Washington to Cambridge, 91, 99, 103, 104; in Philadelphia, 93; death of husband, 139; attentions of Dr. Stuart, 149; second marriage, 149.
Custis, Joseph, settles in Virginia, 16.
Custis, Martha, see Martha Washington.
Custis, Martha, daughter of Martha Washington, 24, 25; portrait of, 32; affection of Washington for, 53, 66, 75; London orders for, 59, 60; illness and death, 67, 72, 75.
Custis, Martha, granddaughter of Mrs. Washington, 119, 183; marries Mr. Thomas Peter, 242.
Custis, William, settles in Virginia, 16.
Cutler, Dr. Manasseh, impressions of New York, 193; describes honors to dead Indian, 236; visits Mount Vernon after General Washington's death, 283–285.

Dalton, Hon. Tristram, in New York, 210.
Dalton, Mrs. Tristram, 199.
Dancing Assembly of Philadelphia, the President's toast to, 229.
Dandridge, Anna Maria, 48 (see Mrs. Burwell Bassett).
Dandridge, Bartholomew, nephew of Mrs. Washington, 168.
Dandridge, Colonel John, settles in New Kent County, 3–5; death of, 549.
Dandridge, Elizabeth (Mrs. Henley), 49, 253, 254.
Dandridge family, of Worcestershire, England, 5.
Dandridge, Hon. William, connection with West family, 4, 5.
Dandridge, Judge Bartholomew, brother of Martha Washington, 49, 127, 128; death of, 168.
Dandridge, Martha (see Martha Washington).
Dandridge, Martha Washington, niece of Mrs. Washington, 127; much at Mount Vernon, 164, 165; marriage, 168.

Digitized by Google

Dandridge, Mrs. John, mother of Martha Washington, 3.
Dandridge, Mrs. John, Mrs. Washington's stepmother, 49, 77, 168.
Dandridge, Nathaniel West, 2.
Dandridge, William, brother of Martha Washington, 49.
Davenport, Mr., at Mount Vernon, 283.
Davies, Rev. Mr., at Mount Vernon, 276, 285.
De Glouvay, Alexander, entertains the Washingtons, 141.
Digges, George, neighbor of the Washingtons, 63, 177.
Dinwiddie, Governor, 24.
Donald, Alexander, at Mount Vernon, 178, 179.
Drawing-rooms of Mrs. Washington in New York, 197, 198; costumes worn by men and women, 214–216.
Drayton, William, at Mount Vernon, 171.
Drinker, Mrs. Henry, describes the Washingtons at Valley Forge, 125, 126; writes of yellow fever, 242.
Duane, Mrs. James, in New York, 215.
Duché, Mrs. Jacob, 92.
Duer, Lady Kitty, in Morristown, 114, 135; in New York, 199.
Dunlap, William, author of Darby's Return, 211.
Dunmore, Lady, reception in Virginia, 11, 80.
Dunmore, Lord, arrives in Virginia, 11, 79–81; on Virginia coast, 89, 90, 106, 107.
Du Ponceau, Peter, describes Washington at Valley Forge, 123, 124.
Durdin, Mrs. Richard, marries William Lewis, 239.

ECHARD, Susan R., describes inauguration of John Adams, 260, 261.
Ellet, Mrs., describes Mrs. Washington, 112.
Ellison, Colonel Thomas, house of, at Newburgh, 143.
Ellsworth, Chief Justice, administers oath to John Adams, 260.
Everett, Edward, quoted, 40, 96.

FAIRFAX, George William, a friend of Washington's, 37, 156.
Fairfax, Lord Thomas, friend and patron of Washington, 29, 65, 70.
Fairfax, Mrs. G. W., supposed love affair with Washington, 37, 38; letter from Mrs. Washington to, 269, 270.
Fairfax, Rev. Bryan, much at Mount Vernon, 63, 70; at Valley Forge, 124; afterwards Lord Fairfax, 269, 277.
Fairfax, Thomas, son of Rev. Bryan, 277.
Fontleroy, Rebecca, early love of Washington's, 43.
Fauquier, Francis, Governor of Virginia, 11; at Washington's wedding, 47.
First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry, escorts the General and Mrs. Washington, 92.
Fisher, Myers, 240.

Digitized by Google

Fitzgerald, Colonel, visits Mount Vernon, 169.
Fitzhugh, Colonel William, of Chatham, 27, 177; entertains the Washingtons, 178.
Fitzhughs in Alexandria, 268, 272.
Ford, Colonel Jacob, death of, 11; owner of Morristown headquarters, 133.
Ford, Mrs. Jacob, occupies headquarters with the Washingtons, 133, 134.
Ford, Paul L., remarks on Mrs. Washington's housekeeping, 159.
Fox, Gilbert, first sang "Hail Columbia" at Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, 211.
Franklin, Dr. Benjamin, desires daughter to dance well, 7; mentioned, 45, 121.
Franklin, Walter, the Washingtons occupy New York residence of, 193.
Franklin, William, Tory Governor of New Jersey, 114.
Fraunces, Samuel, sends housekeeper to Mrs. Washington, 159; superintends Washington's household, 200, 220.
French Alliance celebrated at Valley Forge, 125; at Pluckamin, 128.
French, Walter H., discovers Mrs. Washington's last letter, 283.
Fresnel, M., tutor to G. W. Lafayette, 235, 252, 262.

Gates, Mrs. Horatio, accompanies Mrs. Washington to Cambridge, 94.
Genet, Citizen, first minister from French Republic to United States, 215.
Gérard, Conrad Alexander, review in honor of, 129, 130.
Gerry, Mrs. Elbridge, 199.
Gibbs, Colonel Caleb, in command of Life Guard, 115.
Gibson, Mrs. James, 241 (see Elizabeth Bordley).
Goddard, Mr., at Mount Vernon, 283.
Goodrich, Chauncey, marries Miss Wolcott, 215.
Graham, Mr., at Mount Vernon, 172, 173.
Graham, Mrs. Macaulay, guest at Mount Vernon, 171, 172.
Grasse, Comte de, anecdote of, 138.
Graydon, Alexander, describes General Mifflin, 98.
Grayson, Rev. Mr., 169.
Green, Dr. Ashbel, remarks on Washington's punctuality, 235.
Greene, General Nathaniel, quarters in New Jersey, 114; Quartermaster-General in New Jersey, 119; describes dancing of Washington, 128, 129; at Morristown, 135.
Greene, Mrs. Nathaniel, dances with General Washington, 129; witnesses review in New Jersey, 129, 130; at Morristown, 135; politeness of General Washington to, 209, 210.
Greenleaf, Daniel, recollections of, 96.
Griffith, Dr. David, guest at Mount Vernon, 169.
Grymes, Benjamin, at Morristown, 132.

Digitized by Google

Grymes, Lucy, the "Lowland Beauty," 43.
Guild, Curtis, 57.

HAIL COLUMBIA, origin of, 211.
Hallam, Lewis, actor, 12, 231.
Hamilton, Colonel Alexander, private secretary to General Washington, 115; attentions to Miss Schuyler, 132, 135, 136; mentioned, 210, 239, 245.
Hancock, John, President of Congress, 93; invites the Washingtons to his house in Philadelphia, 105, 106.
Hancock, Mrs. John, in Philadelphia, 105, 106.
Harrison, Colonel Benjamin, wishes to give ball to Mrs. Washington, 93.
Harrison, Colonel Robert H., in Morristown, 115.
Harrison, Mrs. Burton, view regarding Cary sisters, 37.
Hart, Charles H., opinion upon portrait of Mrs. Washington, 273.
Hartley, Colonel, in Philadelphia, 227, 231.
Hasbrouck, Jonathan, founder of Newburgh, 144.
Hatfield, Mrs., sister of Elias Boudinot, 113.
Henderson, Alexander, at Mount Vernon, 171.
Henley, Fanny, marries Mr. Lear, 245.
Henry, Patrick, influence of, 69, 83; at Mount Vernon, 81.
Herbert, Dr. William, entertains the Washingtons, 177.
Herbert, Mr. John, 277.
Hillhouse, Mr., 283, 284.
Hiltzheimer, Jacob, surprise at simplicity of General Washington's life, 224, 225; death of, 244.
Hollingsworth, Captain, escorts Washingtons in Baltimore, 263.
Hooper, Mrs. Thomas, 233.
Hopkinson, Judge Joseph, writes words of "Hail Columbia," 211.
Hopkinson, Mrs. Thomas, 92.
Houdon, French sculptor, at Mount Vernon, 158.
Howard, Colonel John Eager, marriage of, 175, 176.
Howe, General Sir William, at Staten Island, 107; quartered in Philadelphia, 121.
Humphreys, David, member of Washington's military family, 144, 195; accompanies General to Mount Vernon, 151, 154, 172, 179; visits Washingtons in Philadelphia, 255.
Hunter, Mr. John, London merchant, visits Mount Vernon, 32, 157; impressions of Mrs. Washington, 169, 170.
Hunter, William, of Alexandria, Washingtons dine with, 177.
Huntingdon, Daniel, paints Republican Court, 214, 216.

IREDELL, Judge James, describes birthday celebrations, 229, 253, 259; funeral of Mrs. Lear, 245; dines with President, 242; present at inauguration of John Adams, 260.

Digitized by Google

Irving, Washington, says Washington was married at the White House, 46; accounts for Mrs. Washington's habit of knitting, 122.
Izard, Mrs. Ralph, formerly Alice de Lancey, 215; visits Mount Vernon with her daughter, 250, 251.
Izard, Ralph, in New York, 210.

JACKSON, Major William, private secretary to Washington, 198, 210, 238; accompanies President on Eastern trip, 206.
Jansen, Sallie, 146.
Jay, Hon. John, marries Sarah Livingston, 115, in New York, 193, 216.
Jay, Mrs. John, daughter of Governor Livingston, 115; leader of fashion in New York, 216.
Jefferson, Thomas, instructions on his daughter's dancing, 7; in Philadelphia, 245, 262.
John Street Theatre, New York, popularity of, 210.
Johnes, Mrs. Timothy, patriotism of, 118.
Johnes, Rev. Timothy, of Morristown, 111, 201.
Johnson, William S., describes dinner at the Washingtons', 208, 209.
Jones, Frances (see Mrs. John Dandridge).
Jones, Orlando, ancestor of Martha Washington, 3.
Jones, Roland, Rev., of Bruton parish, 3.

KITCHELL, Anna, kindness to soldiers, 118.
Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, 1, 2.
Knox, General Henry, at Cambridge, 99; gives entertainment at Pluckamin, 128, 129; quarters at Morristown, 130–134; at Williamsburg, 138; Newburgh quarters of, 145, 146; friendship with Washington, 182, 258.
Knox, Mrs. Henry, friendship with Mrs. Washington, 99; at Valley Forge, 121; dances with Washington, 128; at Morristown, 129–131, 135; soirées of, 146; in New York, 209; in Philadelphia, 228, 236; Kosciusko, General in Morristown, 135.

LAFAYETTE, George Washington, in Philadelphia, 235; visits Mount Vernon, 252, 262, 267.
Lafayette, Marquis de, affection of the Washingtons for, 135; subscribes to relief association, 136, 137; at Williamsburg, 138; at Newburgh, 145; at Mount Vernon, 167; ball at Annapolis in honor of, 168.
Latrobe, Benjamin, describes visit to Mount Vernon, 266–268.
Laurens, Honorable Henry, visited by the Washingtons, 128.
Law, Mrs. Thomas, 258 (see Elizabeth Custis).
Law, Thomas, marries Elizabeth Custis, 242; lives in Washington, 269.

Digitized by Google

Lear, Mrs. Tobias, in Philadelphia, 218; sudden death of, 244, 245.
Lear, Tobias, secretary to General Washington, 174, 179, 198, 205, 206, 209; ability of, 220, 238; death of wife, 244, 245; second and third marriages, 244, 245, 265; in Alexandria, 249, 250; in Philadelphia, 253, 254; at Mount Vernon, 267; describes last illness of General Washington, 278, 279, 280.
Lee, Arthur, in London, 70.
Lee, General Charles, received at Valley Forge, 124, 125.
Lee, General Henry, commands Virginia lighthorse, 130; dines with General Washington, anecdote of, 163; Governor of Virginia, 250, 258.
Lee, Ludwell, at Mount Vernon, 169, 180.
Lee, Richard Henry, delegate to General Congress, 83; at Mount Vernon, 169.
Lewis, Lawrence, marries Nelly Custis, 275, 276, 284; eldest child born at Mount Vernon, 276.
Lewis, Mrs. Fielding (Betty Washington), discussion about portrait of, 31; home of, 155, 177.
Lewis, Mrs. Lawrence, 48 (see Nelly Custis).
Lewis, Mrs. Warner, accompanies Mrs. Washington to Cambridge, 94, 95.
Lewis, Robert, nephew of General Washington, escorts Mrs. Washington to Cambridge, 184; journal of, 185-190.
Lewis, William, marries Mrs. Durdin, 239.
Liston, Mrs., wife of the British minister, 262, 266.
Liston, Sir Robert, British minister to United States, 215; visits Mount Vernon, 266.
Livingston, Catharine, youngest daughter of Governor Livingston, 114, 115; at Basking Ridge, 132.
Livingston, Mrs., of Clermont, 215.
Livingston, Mrs., Robert R., at West Point, 146; in New York, 215.
Livingston, Sarah, 115; see Mrs. John Jay.
Livingston, Susan, a wit in Revolutionary times, 114, 115; at Basking Ridge, 132.
Livingston, William, Governor of New Jersey, 114; Liberty Hall Residence of, 192.
Lodge, Henry C., says Mrs. Washington was married at St. Peter's Church, 44-46.
Logan, Deborah, describes visit to Mount Vernon, 172, 173.
Logan, Dr. George, at Mount Vernon, 172, 175.
Lott, Cornelia, in Morristown, 135.
Ludlow, Israel, marries Charlotte Chambers, 227.
Luzerne, Chevalier de la, at Morristown, 135; subscribes to relief association, 137; entertains the Washingtons, 141; at Mount Vernon, 167.
Lynch, Mrs., in New York, 199.

Digitized by Google

McClenachan, Deborah, in Philadelphia, 222, 223.
McComb's new house, afterwards known as Mansion House and Bunker's Hotel, 193, 214.
McEvees, Miss, at Mrs. Washington's reception, 194.
McHenry, Dr. James, of Baltimore, 188, 189; Washington writes to, 265.
Maclay, William, regrets leaving New York, 199, 218; describes dinners in New York, 206, 207.
Macon, Martha, ancestress of Martha Washington, 3.
Macubbin, Mrs. James, opens ball with Washington, 151.
McWhirr, Dr., describes a family dinner at Mount Vernon, 165, 166.
Magowen, Mr., 63.
Manigault, Mrs., daughter of Ralph Izard, 250.
Marriner, Captain, tavern of, in Harlem, 210.
Marshall, Christopher, opposes giving ball to Mrs. Washington, 93.
Marshall, James, marries Miss Morris, 255.
Mason, George, of Gunston Hall, guest at Mount Vernon, 65, 70, 80; advises Mrs. Washington to leave Mount Vernon, 90; learning and statesmanship of, 153.
Massey, Rev. Lee, 201.
Mattoon, Mr., at Mount Vernon, 283,
Maxwell, General William, at Valley Forge, 126; at Morristown, 134.
Meade, Bishop, says Washington was married at the White House, 23.
Meade, Colonel Richard K., in Morristown, 115.
Merry, Mrs., marries Thomas Wignell, 211.
Mifflin, Mrs. Thomas, in Cambridge, 98, 100.
Mifflin, General Thomas, gives a dinner to Indian chiefs, 98; Washington resigns commission to, 151; entertains Washington in Philadelphia, 175; escorts Mrs. Washington into Philadelphia, 190.
Miles, Captain of First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry, 190.
Mirailles, Don Juan, in New Jersey, 129, 135; death of, 136.
Montgomery, Mrs. James, in New York, 146; politeness of Washington to, 209, 215.
Montpelier House, hospitality dispensed at, 186.
Morgan, Dr. John, at Cambridge, inoculates Mrs. Washington, 105.
Morgan, Mrs. John, at Cambridge, 99, 100, 101.
Morris, Captain Samuel, escorts the Washingtons, 201, 202.
Morris, Chief Justice, pew in Saint Paul's Church, New York, 201, 202.
Morris, Elliston P., home of, 246.
Morris, Gouverneur, at Mount Vernon, 176.
Morris, Hetty, marries James Marshall, 255, 271.

Digitized by Google

Morris, Robert, entertains the Washingtons, 128–142; stays at Mount Vernon, 176; meets Mrs. Washington in New Jersey, 192; Washingtons occupy home of, 220, 222, 224; marriage of daughter, 255; financial difficulties of, 271.

Morris, Mrs. Robert, patriotism of, 83; visits Mount Vernon, 176, 177; meets Mrs. Washington at Philadelphia, 191; accompanies her to New York, 192, 199; in New York, 207, 208, 214; a friend of Mrs. Washington's, 222, 271; country seat of, 237.

Morse, Dr. Jedediah, describes dinner at Mount Vernon, 171.

Mortier, Abraham, *bon mot* about, 202.

Mortier House, headquarters of General Washington in 1776, scene of Hickey plot, 202.

Morton, John, of New York, lives near Morristown, 113.

Mossom, Rev. Mr., marries Washingtons, 45.

Moustier, Comte de, visits at Mount Vernon, 179; gives ball in New York, 215.

Neill, Rev. E. D., quotes letters of Mary Cary, 37, 38, 40.

New Jersey women, patriotism of, 118.

New Year's Day observances in New York, 213, 214, 215.

Nicholas, Robert Carter, agent of Mrs. Washington, 25.

Nicholson, Francis, lays out Williamsburg, 9; patron of William and Mary, 18.

Osgood, Samuel, marries widow of Walter Franklin, 193.

Otis, Mrs. Harrison Gray (Sally Foster), 215.

Paca, William, Governor of Maryland, escorts General Washington, 152.

Page, Governor John, compares New York and Philadelphia, 219.

Page, Mann, gives dinner for General Washington, 177.

Parke, Daniel, eccentricities of, 17, 18; service to Queen Anne, 19.

Parke, Frances (see Frances Parke Custis).

Peale, Charles Willson, transparencies exhibited by, 140, 141; paints portrait of Mrs. Washington, 174, 256.

Peale, James, relates anecdote of Mrs. Washington, 256, 257.

Pendleton, Edmund, impressions of Mrs. Washington, 81, 82.

Penn, Governor John, carriage of, 224.

Penn, Mrs. John, lives at Landsdowne, 237.

Peter, Eleanor, great-grandchild of Mrs. Washington, 266.

Peter, Mrs. Thomas, 264, 266 (see Martha Custis).

Peter, Mr. Thomas, marries Martha Custis, 242, 253, 266, 269.

Digitized by Google

Peters, Judge Richard, lives at Belmont, 240, 245.
Philadelphia, City Cavalry, First Troop of, meet Mrs. Washington at Chester, 190.
Philipse, Mary, admired by Washington, 43.
Pickering, Timothy, at Morristown, 111; Secretary of War, 188.
Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, visits Mount Vernon, 176.
Pine, Robert Edge, paints portraits of the Washingtons, 173, 174, 196, 256.
Pleasants, Mrs., at Valley Forge, 125.
Pohick Church, Washington interested in rebuilding, 67.
Popham, Major, says Washington was a communicant, 201, 202.
Porterfield, General Robert, 201.
Potts, Isaac, owns headquarters at Valley Forge, 120, 122.
Powel, Mr. Samuel, friend of the Washingtons, 176, 238.
Powel, Mrs. Samuel, attractions of, 238, 239; letter from Mrs. Washington to, 270–272.
Prescott, General, capture of, 124.
Priestly, Dr. Joseph, in Philadelphia, 235.

Randolph, John, accompanies Lord Dunmore, 89.
Randolph, Peyton, delegate to General Congress, 83.
Rawle, William, marries Sarah Coates Burge, 239.
Rawle, William, Jr., anecdote of, 240.
Reed, General Joseph, receives Mrs. Washington in Philadelphia, 92–94.
Reed, Mrs. Joseph, entertains Mrs. Washington, 92, 137.
Richmond Hill, residence of Mr. and Mrs. Adams, 202, 218.
Robertson, Archibald, paints portrait of the Washingtons, 208, 256.
Rochambeau, Count de, at Mount Vernon, 138; at Newburgh, 144.
Rochefoucault, Duke de, describes Philadelphia life, 229, 237.
Rush, Richard, describes Philadelphia residence of Washington, 221.
Russell, Thomas, owns Craigie house, 96.

St. Peter's Church, New Kent County, 23, 44, 45.
Schuyler, Elizabeth, in Morristown, 132, 135.
Schuyler, General Philip, in New York, 210.
Smith, William S., at Annapolis; marriage of, 154.
Smith, Mrs. William, daughter of John Adams, 210, 215.
Snowden, Major, entertains the Washingtons, 185, 186.
Spottiswood, Alexander, Governor, 12.
Spotswood, General, visit of General Washington to, 177; at Mount Vernon, 266.
Stark, General John, command of, at Morristown, 135.

Digitized by Google

Steuben, Baron, at Valley Forge, 123, 124; Morristown, 135; at Newburgh, 145; in New York, 210.
Stewart, Mrs. Walter, lives near the Washingtons in Philadelphia, 222, 239.
Stirling, Lady, a sister of Governor Livingston, 114; at Valley Forge, 121; near Morristown, 135; New York, 199.
Stuart, Dr. David, 149, 150; daughters of, 284.
Stuart, Gilbert, paints portraits of the Washingtons, 197, 256–258; of Elizabeth and Nelly Custis, 242, 273.

Temple, Lady, wife of British minister, 199.
Thacher, Dr. James, in camp, 102, 130.
Theatre, Chestnut Street above Sixth, opens, 232.
Tilghman, Colonel Tench, at Valley Forge, 125; at Morristown, 132, 133; at Newburgh, 144; with Washington at Annapolis; 151, 154.
Tracy, Hon. Uriah, reply to British minister, 215.
Tracy, Nathaniel, of Newburyport, 96.
Travis, Mrs. John, Philadelphia, beauty of, 239.
Troupe, Mrs., describes visit to Mrs. Washington, 116.
Trumbull, Governor, friend of Washington's, 275, 280; letter from Mrs. Washington to, 280.
Trumbull, John, portrait of Washington, 29.
Tuttle, Dr. Joseph, reminiscences of, 116, 118, 132.
Twining, Thomas, describes the Washingtons in Philadelphia, 221, 222.
Tyler, Lyon G., president of William and Mary, 18, 46.

Van Horne, Colonel, 186, 187.
Vassall, Colonel John, 96.
Vaughan, Mrs. Samuel, at Mount Vernon, 175.
Villefranche, Major, designs arbor at West Point, 147.
Volney, Mr., at Mount Vernon, 266.

Walker, Benjamin, 144, 151, 154.
Wansey, Mr. Henry, describes theatre in Philadelphia, 219, 220; breakfasts at the Washingtons', 233, 237.
Warren, Dr. James, President of Provincial Council, 99; Mrs. James, friend of Mrs. Washington, 99, 100; describes Mrs. Washington and family, 100, 102, 104, 105.
Warren, Mrs. James, letters from Mrs. Washington to, 120, 203, 204.
Warville, Brissot de, describes Washingtons at Mount Vernon, 166, 167.
Washington, Betty, sister of the General, 31 (see Mrs. Fielding Lewis).
Washington, George, meets Mrs. Custis, 25–28, 32; appearance and manners, 28–30; portraits early and late, 29, 30, 32, 173, 180, 255, 258;

Digitized by Google

intimacy with Lord Fairfax, 29; with G. W. Fairfax and wife, 38, 39, 156; courtship, 31–36, 44; letter to Mrs. Custis, 37; early love affairs, 37–44; married to Martha Custis, 44–49; sends certificate of marriage to Robert Cary, 50; elected to House of Burgesses, 50–52; takes wife to Mount Vernon, 53; a good step-father, 53, 54; frequent visits to Williamsburg, 55, 57; orders clothes and livery from London, 58, 72; enjoys country pursuits, 58, 63, 179, 182; fondness for hunting, 63; a hospitable host, 64, 65; vestryman in Christ Church, Alexandria, 67; interested in rebuilding of Pohick Church, 67; takes John Custis to King's College, 73; present at marriage of, 78; great affection for Patsey Custis, 75–77; delegate to General Congress, 81–83; Commander-in-Chief, 84; letter to his wife on taking command, 84, 85; humorous expressions on married life, 86; long absence from Mount Vernon, 88, 137; in Cambridge, 96, 97; headquarters in New York, 105; declines John Hancock's invitation, 106; the Hickey plot, 106; in Morristown, 110, 130, 133, 134; illnesses of, 111, 204, 212; encourages sociability at headquarters, 115; at Valley Forge, 120; described by Elkanah Watson and Peter Du Ponceau, 121, 123, 124; receives General Charles Lee, 124, 125; celebrates French alliance at Valley Forge, 126; at Fredericksburg, 128; guest of Henry Laurens in Philadelphia, 128; reviews troops in presence of Indian chiefs, 130; at Hampton, 138; leaves field of Yorktown to attend deathbed of John Custis, 138, 139; adopts younger children of, 139; enters into rejoicings in Philadelphia, 140, 141; attends Commencement of University, 142; goes to Newburgh, 142; at Newburgh, 143; entertains distinguished guests, 144; attends entertainment in honor of Dauphin, 146, 147; declines to give advice on marriage, 149, 150; resigns commission at Annapolis, 150; returns to Mount Vernon, 152, 153; visits mother, 154, 174, 178; generosity to, 184, 185; entertains many guests, 155, 156, 171–174; enlarges house at Mount Vernon, 157; anecdotes of home life, 160–165; guilty of a pun, 165, 166; visited by Luzerne and Lafayette, 167, 168; described by Mr. John Hunter, 169, 170; attends federal convention in Philadelphia, 174–176; trip to Fredericksburg, 177, 178; reluctant to enter public life, 178, 179, 182, 183; meets Mrs. Washington in New Jersey, 192; residences in New York and Philadelphia, 193, 220, 222; etiquette political and social,

Digitized by Google

194, 195, 198; levees and drawing-rooms, 195, 196, 214, 228; churches attended by, in New York and Philadelphia, 201, 232, 233; communicant of English church, 201, 202; sets out on Eastern tour, 204, 206; state dinners described, 206, 207, 234, 235; desires to avoid extravagance in living, 200; attends theatre in New York and Philadelphia, 209–212, 231, 232; death of mother, 213; remarks on New Year customs, 213; coaches of, 223–226; birthday celebrations, 229, 231, 258, 259; entertains Indians, 236; occupies house in Germantown, 246; Whiskey Rebellion, 250; visit of George Washington Lafayette to, 252; at inauguration of John Adams, 260, 261; farewell dinner, 261, 262; leaves Philadelphia, 262, 263; life at Mount Vernon, 264–268; facetious letter of, 272, 273; writes upon love affairs of Nelly Custis, 274–276; Mrs. Carrington's description of, 276, 277; beginning of last illness, 278; illness and death described by Mr. Lear, 279, 280; temporary resting-place, 281; removal to new tomb, 281; proposal to remove remains of Washington to the capital, 281, 282.

Washington, George Augustine, marriage of, 162, 169.

Washington, John Augustine, brother of the General, dies, 175.

Washington, Judge Bushrod, 185, 266.

Washington, Lawrence, brother of the General, 29.

Washington, Lawrence, 231.

Washington, Lewis W., opinion on portrait of Mrs. Washington, 31.

Washington, Lund, superintendent at Mount Vernon, 65, 71, 91, 149; anecdotes of, 65, 66, 157; writes to General about danger to Mrs. Washington, 88, 89.

Washington, Martha, birth and ancestry, 3–5; education, 6–8; belle in Williamsburg, 14, 16; marriage to D. P. Custis, 20–23; children, 24; death of husband, 24, 25; residence during widowhood, 23; meets Washington, 25–30; Woolaston portrait, 31, 32; courtship, 32–37; marriage, 44–50; spends honeymoon in Williamsburg, 50; estate of, 36, 50, 62; happiness at Mount Vernon, 53, 58; an anxious mother, 54–57; a notable housewife, 58, 61, 62, 65; London clothes ordered for, 58, 59; benevolence, 66, 67; patriotism, 70, 71, 80–83; illness and death of daughter, 72, 75–77; letter to Eleanor Calvert, 78; letter from General to, on taking command, 84; thought to be in danger at Mount Vernon, 88–91; sets out for Cambridge, 90; first called Lady Washington in Philadelphia, 94; in Cambridge, 96, 97; encourages sociability at headquarters,

Digitized by Google

97, 113, 115, 129; friendship with Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Warren, 99, 100; inoculated for small-pox in Philadelphia, 105, 106; in Morristown, 77, 109, 119, 130; described by Mrs. Bland, 112; amusing account of visit from Morristown women, 116, 117; at Valley Forge, 120; describes quarters, 120; helps sick and wounded, 122, 123; described by Mrs. Drinker, 125; devotion of soldiers to, 126; describes review of troops, 130; night alarms in Ford mansion, 134; nurses de Mirailles in last illness, 136; joins soldiers' aid society, 136, 137; receives the General at Mount Vernon, 137; death of son, 138, 139; accompanies the General to Philadelphia, 140; at Newburgh, 143; entertains distinguished guests, 144; spends summer in camp, illness, 148, 149; meets Washington at Annapolis, 150; returns to Mount Vernon, 152, 153; duties as hostess, 158, 159; happiness in home life, 160, 264-266, 276; a strict disciplinarian, 162; anecdote of curl papers, 164; unexpected arrival of guests, 164; invitation to, from the Marchioness de Lafayette, 167; portraits of, 173, 174, 256, 257; reluctance to leave Mount Vernon, 183; does not accompany her husband to the capital, 184; travels under care of Robert Lewis, 184, 185, 186; reception in Baltimore, 187, 190; honors shown to, in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, 190-192; welcome in New York, 193, 199; etiquette, 194, 195; drawing rooms in New York, 197, 198, 214, 215; regular attendant of church, 201; expressions upon public life, 202-206; descriptions of, 209, 222; household of, 220, 221; drawing-rooms described, 226-228; attends birthnight ball, 230; simplicity in domestic life, 233, 234; congenial life in Philadelphia, 237-245; in Germantown, 246; letters to Mrs. G. A. Washington, 246, 255; returns to Mount Vernon, 262, 263; letters to old friends, 269, 271, 272; descriptions of, in later days, 277, 283, 284; the gathering twilight, 279, 280; fortitude under affliction, 280, 281; letter to Congress, 282; visited by Manasseh Cutler and others, 283-285; illness and death, 285, 286.

Washington, Mary, visits of, to her son George, 154, 174, 178; gifts of Washington to, 184; character of, 184; death of, 213.

Washington, Mrs. George Augustine (Fanny Bassett), letters from Mrs. Washington to, 204-206, 246-255; Washington writes to, 244; visits Mrs. Washington in Philadelphia, 352; marries Mr. Lear, 265.

Digitized by Google

Washington, Mrs. Jane, letter to, 201, 202.
Washington, Mrs. Lund, at wedding of G. A. Washington, 169.
Washington, Mrs. Warner, 277.
Washington, Richard, of London, 58.
Washington, Warner, 63.
Watson, Elkanah, at Valley Forge, 121; at Mount Vernon, 171.
Watts, Lady Mary, 199.
Wayne, General Anthony, at Morristown, 134.
Westlake, Mrs., describes Mrs. Washington at Valley Forge, 122, 123.
West, Nathaniel, Colonel, 4.
West Unity, 4.
Whaley, Matthew, the Mattey School, 10.
Whaley, Mrs. Mary, 10.
Wharton, Thomas, Governor of Pennsylvania, 125.
White, Bishop, describes farewell dinner to President Washington, 262.
Wick, Temperance, exploit of, 131, 132.
Wignell, Thomas, English actor, 211.
William and Mary College founded, 9, 18.
Williamsburg, social life of, 8, 11, 12.
Willis, Colonel, gives dinner to Washington, 178.
Wilson, Judge James, 245, 260.
Wingate, Hon. Paine, dines with Washingtons, 199.
Wolcott, Miss, marries Chauncey Goodrich, 215.
Wolcott, Mrs. Olive, attractions of, 215; in Philadelphia, 228; Nelly Custis writes to, 263, 273, 274.
Wolcott, Oliver, Secretary of the Treasury, 234, 235.
Wynkoop, Henry, speaker, calls on Mrs. Morris, 199.

Yrujo, Marquis de, minister from Spain, at Mount Vernon, 252.

Digitized by Google

WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

Now Ready:

Martha Washington
By Anne Hollingsworth Wharton

Mercy Warren
By Alice Brown

Eliza Pinckney
By Harriott Horry Ravenel

Dolly Madison
By Maud Wilder Goodwin

Margaret Winthrop
By Alice Morse Earle.

Each with photogravure portrait or facsimile reproduction, gilt top, uncut edges, $1.25.

THE SET, FIVE VOLUMES, $6.00.

THE remarkably cordial reception which the public has given to this series of biographies picturing the social and domestic life of Colonial and Revolutionary times, is reflected in the newspaper reviews. "Each book," says the Buffalo *Express*, "has been the product of study at first hand into the social conditions of the time in which its heroine was placed; it has furnished a vivid picture of those times from the woman's point of view; and as such, each volume has deserved an honorable place in historical literature." "Each," says the Philadelphia *Press*, "has its own particular charm; each adds its full share to the social and historical value of the series." The *Churchman* refers to the series as "narratives of the highest historical value," while the Boston *Journal* characterizes it as "excellently planned and entertainingly carried out."

1

Digitized by Google

MARTHA WASHINGTON. By ANNE H. WHARTON. With Portrait in Photogravure, 12mo, $1.25.

Miss Wharton's researches for fresh material regarding Mrs. Washington's public, social, and domestic life have covered a wide field, and have borne fruit in a volume which will win for her a multitude of appreciative readers.

Chapter Headings

I — A Little Virginia Maid
II — An Early Marriage
III — The Young Virginia Colonel
IV — Early Days at Mt. Vernon
V — The Shadow of Coming Events
VI — A Journey to Cambridge
VII — Camp Life
VIII — After the War
IX — Life in New York
X — Philadelphia the Capital
XI — Last Days at Mt. Vernon

"A most welcome series of brief biographies." — Hartford *Courant.*

MERCY WARREN (sister of James Otis). By ALICE BROWN. With Portrait in Photogravure, 12mo, $1.25.

"Miss Brown's book gives one an adequate idea of the manners and customs, the habit of thought and form of expression, in that far-away time." — Philadelphia *Press.*

"Miss Brown has contrived to make an admirably realistic portrayal." — Boston *Beacon.*

"It is a very entertaining book." — Chicago *Inter-Ocean.*

"The author's literary grace and skill are evinced on every page." — Providence *Journal.*

"It is to be hoped that American girls are reading this series of biographies." — Boston *Journal.*

Digitized by Google

ELIZA PINCKNEY (wife of Chief Justice Pinckney, of South Carolina). By HARRIOTT HORRY RAVENEL. With Facsimile Reproduction, 12mo, $1.25.

"To say of these letters of Mrs. Pinckney that they 'smell sweet and blossom in the dust,' is to give but an imperfect idea of their charm. There is, indeed, no suggestion of dust in these delightful letters, so charged are they with vitality, with the tenderest and most touching devotion, so fragrant with domestic pieties and household virtues. They abound in curious and vivid pictures of the lives of the Carolinian planters, and of Charleston society in the eighteenth century." — *National Observer* (London).

"Of all the 'historical series' lately projected there is none that possesses greater interest than the Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times." — Albany *Journal*.

DOLLY MADISON (wife of James Madison). By MAUD WILDER GOODWIN. With Portrait in Photogravure, 12mo, $1.25.

"Mrs. Goodwin's Memoir will not fail to find sympathetic readers on this side of the Atlantic, for it depicts in a simple yet graphic style a very attractive personality, while it abounds in quaint and pleasing traits of bygone life and manners in the United States." — London *Daily News*.

"It is the attractive personalities of the Madisons themselves that lend to the volume its principal charm. It is pleasantly and sympathetically written." — *The Scotsman*.

"A charming, brilliant, fascinating book." — New York *Mail and Express*.

Digitized by Google

"The series introduced by Messrs. Scribner's Sons is admirable in intention, and so far excellent in execution, and we may safely predict that it will prove a valuable element in the education of the American girl." — New York *Times.*

MARGARET WINTHROP (wife of Governor John Winthrop, of Massachusetts). By ALICE MORSE EARLE. With Facsimile Reproduction, 12mo, $1.25.

"These pages give a modest but vivid account of the home life and personal character of a sturdy, God-fearing race. — *The Speaker* (London).

"For a pleasing description of the Boston of the seventeenth century, we must refer readers to Mrs. Earle's book." — London *Daily Chronicle.*

"It is a vivid portraiture of the life of the Puritan woman." — New York *Tribune.*

"The volume is history, biography, romance combined." — Boston *Advertiser.*

"They are true historical pictures." — Brooklyn *Eagle.*

In Preparation

CATHERINE SCHUYLER (daughter of John Van Rensselaer and Engeltie Livingston, and wife of Major-General Philip Schuyler). By MARY GAY HUMPHREYS. With portrait.

Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers
153-157 Fifth Avenue, New York

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google